

BRIGADIER GENERAL JEFFERSON C. DAVIS:
CIVIL WAR GENERAL

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by

Bruce V. Sones, Major, USA
B.S., Pennsylvania State University, State College, Pennsylvania, 1987
M.P.A., Columbus State University, Columbus, Georgia, 1996

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THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

Name of Candidate: Major Bruce V. Sones

Thesis Title: Brigadier General Jefferson C. Davis: Civil War General

Approved by:

_____, Thesis Committee Chairman
William G. Robertson, Ph.D.

_____, Member
LTC Kim M. Juntunen, M.A.

Accepted this 2d day of June 2000 by:

_____, Director, Graduate Degree Programs
Philip J. Brookes, Ph.D.

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ABSTRACT

BRIGADIER GENERAL JEFFERSON C. DAVIS: CIVIL WAR GENERAL
by Major Bruce V. Sones, USA, 163 pages.

This thesis is a historical analysis and an assessment of Brigadier General Jefferson C. Davis' life with special emphasis on his division's performance during the Civil War. The thesis will discuss Davis' quick rise through the military ranks, which led to his eventual assumption of a corps command by the end of the Civil War. Davis' career was not without controversy. He was a nontraditional soldier in an army that was very traditional. He was a tough disciplinarian and took training of soldiers seriously. He was also aggressive, feisty, and confrontational. It was these later characteristics that on occasion led him into trouble with his superiors and may have been determiners in his nonselection for promotions and specific assignments.

The thesis begins with an examination of Davis' background and life from his birth through his participation in the Mexican War and the initiation of hostilities at Fort Sumter. Next, Davis' Civil War experiences to include the Battles of Pea Ridge and Murfreesboro and details of Davis' performance at the Battle of Chickamauga will be discussed. Thereafter, Davis' march through the South with General Sherman and the remainder of his military career and life will be discussed. Finally, an analysis will be presented of who Davis was and why he did or did not achieve the potential that he thought he deserved.

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This work would not have been completed without the continuous encouragement that I received from my parents, Vernon and Helga Sones. They, through their lives, have been wonderful examples for my brothers and me. They have lived their lives unselfishly and have provided an abundance of wise counsel over the years. They have modeled integrity, discipline, patience, and unconditional love.

My son, keep your father's commands and do not forsake your mother's teaching. Bind them upon your heart forever; fasten them around your neck. When you walk, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; when you awake, they will speak to you. For these commands are a lamp, this teaching is a light, and the corrections of discipline are the way to life. Proverbs 6:20-23

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CHAPTER 1

BOY SOLDIER

When the name of Jefferson Davis is mentioned in the context of the Civil War, memory calls to mind Jefferson Davis who was the president of the Confederacy. Unbeknownst to many, there was another man with a similar name who was also involved in the Civil War. This man was Jefferson Columbus Davis, a general in the Union Army. Jefferson Columbus Davis was born in Clark County, Indiana, on the second of March 1828. His family, originally from Kentucky, had settled some years before his birth on a farm in Clark County, Indiana, near the town of Charleston. Davis was the oldest child of William and Mary Davis and to include Jefferson Davis the family had eight children, seven boys and one girl. Davis spent his formative years playing on the farm and on occasion listening to his father tell stories about his forefathers who had fought in the Indian Wars in Kentucky.¹

Davis was rather small in size when compared to the others that he played and grew up with. He was active and was always fond of the outdoors and was at ease both on the farm and in the woods. Even from his youth he seemed to know that he would somehow be in the military. A lifetime friend and fellow soldier, Brigadier General James B. Fry would write after the Civil War, "He felt he was a born military chieftain."² In 1833, at the age of six, Davis was an attendee at a "grand dinner" for a Company of Rangers that had been recruited from Clark County and were about to depart to fight the Indians. While at this dinner, he made up his mind that he would one day be a soldier.³

As Davis grew, his interest in the military continued. In April 1846, General Zachary Taylor, who was in Texas, was fired upon by Mexican troops. Shortly thereafter, President Polk presented a speech to Congress at which he announced that it was time to engage in conflict with the Mexicans over the Texas territory. Shortly after this, Davis, who had just turned eighteen and was attending school in Charleston, heard a reading of President Polk's address to Congress in one of his classes.⁴ Like his peers that were around him, Davis was immediately caught up in the frenzy of possible war. He quit school and enlisted as a private in a company of volunteers that was forming in Clark County, Indiana. The company he joined, which was commissioned on the ninth of June, was initially called the Clark County Guards, but was soon identified as Company I, Third Regiment of Indiana Volunteers.⁵

By June 1846, the Indiana Volunteers had filled their requirements for enlistments and soon began their training at Camp Whitcomb in New Albany, Indiana. Jefferson Columbus Davis and his company, Company I, joined nine other companies to form the Third Regiment. The commander for the regiment was Colonel James H. Lane. All told, there were 869 soldiers in the regiment.⁶ It was in this unit that Davis began what would turn out to be a thirty-three year military career that would see him involved in many famous historical events and see him rise from the ranks of the enlisted to the rank of general.

Military life for Davis did not start out easy. As a soldier he received \$10.00 per month and a \$3.50 clothing allowance.⁷ Through the first of July 1846, Sergeant Davis and the Third Regiment trained and drilled in preparation for the possible and very

anticipated deployment to Mexico. On the third of July 1846, they were notified that they would be leaving to participate in the war in Mexico. On the fifth of July the Indiana Volunteers moved to the ships and on Thursday, the ninth of July, the Third Indiana Regiment departed Clark County. As they boarded the steamboats, *The Homer* and *The James Hewitt*, that would carry them down river, the colors were flying and “Yankee Doodle” could be heard playing from the fife and drum.⁸ Upon leaving Clark County the Third Regiment moved down the Mississippi river with many from the regiment displaying “somber countenance” and arrived in New Orleans on the fourteenth of July 1846.⁹ There was little time for any in the unit to tour New Orleans. The Third Regiment set up camp south of the city in a marsh area where most of their belongings and equipment became soaked with water. They waited four days before boarding three ships and continuing down to the mouth of the Mississippi River and into the Gulf of Mexico with a destination of Brazos Santiago.

The experience of sailing on the Gulf proved to be a miserable experience for most of the men of the Third Regiment. Few if any had experienced the open seas. The men of the regiment were crowded into the hulls of the ships. The combination of close quarters, poor rations, seasickness, and the incessant pounding of the waves against the hull of the ship made for a miserable journey.¹⁰ By the twenty seventh of July 1846 the Third Regiment landed on Brazos Santiago Island at the mouth of the Rio Grande having lost six men to death from sickness as they crossed the Gulf.¹¹ Soon after their arrival the Third Regiment left the Island and moved inland along the river about nine miles by land

and sixteen miles by water and encamped opposite Barita at a camp that they named Camp Belknap.¹²

As was expected, the members of the Third Regiment found military life in Mexico to be a little different compared to the training that they had completed in Indiana, before their deployment. Camp Belknap was a "pleasant location at first" but that changed as bushes were cut away to leave only a few to protect the soldier from the burning sun.¹³ The temperatures were much hotter than they were use to in Indiana. There was not much protection from this heat, and the requirement for clean drinkable water was much greater. This was complicated by a rise in the Rio Grande and the flooding of the plain between it and the camp. Because of the contaminated conditions that were created many of the Indianans became sick.¹⁴ As can be imagined by these conditions, the men had to alter their training and drill schedules in preparation for the battles they were sent to participate in. Training and drill were broken down to take place twice a day. The first period was during the morning hours while it was yet cool. During this period the officers to include the sergeants and corporals would drill at 5 o'clock and at 7 o'clock. The company drill would take place for two hours. The second period of training and drill would take place in the evening at 5 o'clock when the regiment would drill as a whole for two hours.¹⁵

The Third Regiment continued to train and drill, with no hint of seeing any combat. Rumors began to move throughout the unit. These rumors covered the full spectrum as to what was to happen to the Third Regiment. Some rumors said that the regiment would move into combat soon and that at a moment's notice they needed to be

prepared to move. There were also rumors reported that the regiment was not going to see combat but was going to redeploy back to the United States. This had a major psychological effect on the men and many of them were losing their desire to get into the war.¹⁶

In October 1846, General Taylor was in Monterey, Mexico, and requested reinforcements to take the place of the soldiers that had been lost in the war that had been part of the main body. The Third Regiment was designated as a replacement unit and by the end of October 1846 it arrived in Matamoros.¹⁷ Life thus far for the Third Regiment had been hard. To this point, since their arrival in Mexico, they had lost over one-hundred men to disease and exposure in the Regiment and in Davis' I Company three had died.¹⁸ The Regiment remained in Camp Clark, Matamoros, till December at which time the Third Regiment moved across eighty miles of hot, dusty, earth to the town of Camargo.

On the fifteenth of December 1846, the Third Regiment left Camargo and moved to join with the main body of United States troops that were located in Saltillo.¹⁹ The Third Regiment arrived in the vicinity of Saltillo and set up camp about five miles from the city.²⁰ General Taylor was close by with the main body of the United States army at Agua Nueva. On the eleventh of January 1847, the Third Regiment moved into the city of Saltillo and took up the role of an occupation force.²¹ They remained in Saltillo throughout the remainder of January and into February. During this time the morale of the soldiers vacillated between high and low. There were rumors that abounded that

spoke of the Mexicans being close by and that a big fight was on the near horizon. Other rumors stated that the Third Regiment would be sent home without seeing combat.

The Third Regiment waited in Saltillo while Mexican General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna formed an army of 20,000 drilled and disciplined veterans in the city of San Luis Potosi. Despite the immanent attack by Santa Anna, Davis's moral was high and he was in good spirits.²²

On the cold wintry morning of the twenty seventh of January 1847, Santa Anna and his soldiers began moving the 240 miles toward the Americans, led by General Taylor, at Agua Nueva.²³ As word came that Santa Anna was moving, the Third Regiment was called up from Saltillo and moved to Agua Nueva to join with General Taylor. On the twenty first of February 1847, scouts told General Taylor that Santa Anna's army was about thirty-five miles from Agua Nueva and closing.²⁴ General Taylor, felt that he was in a vulnerable position at Agua Nueva because the direction that Santa Anna was coming from would put the Mexican forces in the rear of General Taylor's force. General Taylor ordered his forces to move back about twenty miles to Buena Vista. Buena Vista, which was seven miles south of Saltillo, offered a position of natural strength from which they could better fight. In their hasty departure the U.S. forces burned their supplies they could not move with them.²⁵ By the twenty second of February 1847 the American forces were in Buena Vista.

Buena Vista was a much better place for the American Army to fight than was Agua Nueva. It offered a variety of terrain to include mountains and hills on the right side of the American position that could cut off any military action.²⁶ In the center

portion of the American position at La Angostura, the San Luis road that wound up to the position could easily be covered by artillery fire from the guns in Captain Washington's Fourth Artillery Battery.²⁷ To the left of the position was an area of relatively open and flat terrain that had a number of ravines and arroyos that traversed it.²⁸ It was this area that was of the most concern to General Taylor with respect to an attack by the Mexicans. His concern was that Santa Anna could possibly get through the left area of his position and if this happened Santa Anna would be able to attack the rest of the American position from the flank and rear and perhaps defeat the Americans. The fact that there were some ravines in this open area did ease General Taylor's mind some as he knew it would be difficult for the enemy to easily move any of their cavalry or artillery to engage the Americans effectively. General Taylor positioned his forces to prepare for the anticipated battle. As part of the positioning of the forces the Third Indiana Regiment was placed in a reserve role to guard the supplies for the American forces.

The entire maneuvering by the Americans did not go unnoticed by Santa Anna. In fact, he believed the maneuvering of the American force from Agua Nueva to Buena Vista was a withdrawal on the American force's part. In his excitement of what he perceived to be an almost certain rout of the Americans, Santa Anna chose not to rest his forces who had just traveled two hundred and forty miles over rugged terrain and desert, but he decided to press his soldiers. He pressed his forces forward believing that the pressure would add confusion to the American forces he thought were in retreat. While Santa Anna and his forces were closing on the American position the Americans had been quickly preparing themselves for battle. When Santa Anna saw this, it caused him to

rethink his plans. He found out that he was not pursuing a retreating American force, but had come upon a rested U.S. force that was prepared to fight and that he now had a force that was completely exhausted from days of long marching. This decision to not press an attack was a mistake on Santa Anna's part. Had Santa Anna attacked, he would have found that the American troops were actually unprepared and that he would have probably defeated them. His force outnumbered the U.S. forces by three to one.²⁹

The Mexican army, as it approached the American forces, was in poor shape. The men were in major want of supplies and had been moving for a number of days. Their numbers were now at 15,000 as they had lost 5,000 to illness and death, in their movement to Buena Vista.³⁰ Santa Anna needed time to form and prepare his forces. This was something that General Taylor recognized, and he used it to his advantage. Santa Anna, not knowing that General Taylor recognized that his forces were in need of supplies, decided to use some characteristic trickery to buy some time so he could prepare the Mexican army for battle. He sent Major Liegenburg, a German in the Mexican service, under a white flag of truce, forward to General Taylor with a letter from Santa Anna to ask him to surrender.³¹ Santa Anna thought that General Taylor would surrender primarily because his approximate 4,600 troops were far outnumbered by the Mexican force of 15,000 troops.³² General Taylor refused the surrender deal that Santa Anna offered. Santa Anna then moved his forces forward on the American's and some of the Mexican troops ascended the mountains on the right side of the American position with the hope of getting into a position where they could lay fires down on the Americans. The Kentucky Cavalry was dispatched to meet this threat. There were some small

skirmishes between the two forces that ensued but this small arms fire exchange with negligible results. For that day, neither side made any advances and as nighttime set in, both sides remained in the positions they had held prior to the beginning of the skirmishes.

The evening of the twenty second of February 1847, saw the Mexicans and the Americans settled into their positions for the evening. General Taylor, feeling secure in his position, left his second in command, General Wool in charge of the army and returned to Saltillo to check on the Americans main supply base. General Taylor took with him the Mississippi Volunteers who were led by Colonel Jefferson Davis. General Taylor wanted to examine the main supply base because he felt that it was undermanned and very vulnerable to possible attack by the Mexicans. He spent the night in Saltillo and used two companies from the Mississippi Volunteers to reinforce the supply base. As the dawn approached General Taylor made his way back to Buena Vista with Colonel Davis and the remainder of the Mississippi Volunteers.³³

In Buena Vista the sun was beginning to rise. It was the twenty third of February and the American army prepared for the coming day of battle. The preparation included the positioning of the Third Indiana Regiment, Sergeant Jefferson Columbus Davis' unit, on a knoll in the center of the U.S. position, behind Captain J. M. Washington's Fourth Artillery Battery. Washington's battery had been given the responsibility for covering the San Luis road in the center of the American position. Their initial attack was at the center of the American line where a Mexican column of infantry and cavalry advanced up the San Luis Road, led by General Mora y Villamil's. The Mexicans fired on Captain

Washington's battery, overshooting the battery and having their rounds fall in the vicinity of the Third Indiana regiment, killing several of their pack-horses.³⁴ Washington's Battery quickly repelled the Mexican attack with their own artillery fires as the Mexican infantry and cavalry were no match for the canister shot that the artillery fired at them.

Simultaneously to this attack in the center of the U.S. position, the Mexicans attacked the left flank of the U.S. position with 7,000 soldiers led by General Manuel Maria Lambardini.³⁵ Defending the left flank was the Second Indiana Regiment and two companies from the Third Indiana Regiment that had been attached to them earlier in the day. They were able to hold the Mexicans attack for about thirty minutes, but the pressure became too great and the inexperienced soldiers fell back in retreat. The retreat soon became a rout. General John Wool, who was in charge of the American position at Buena Vista while General Taylor was away, sent the Second Illinois Regiment that was in reserve of the Second Indianan's forward to fill that had been left in the line. This was only a temporary fix, for the whole left side of the U.S. position had been turned. The whole left flank of the American position was in danger of collapse and the threat of the Mexicans getting into a position where they would be able to attack the Americans from the rear was beginning to develop.

Just as the left flank was collapsing and seemed lost, General Taylor appeared from Saltillo. He brought with him the remainder of the regiment of volunteers from Mississippi. General Taylor rode forward and when the retreating American troops of the Second Indiana Regiment saw him, they responded to his presence and following his lead the retreating soldiers turned on the pursuing Mexicans. The Mississippians, under the

leadership of Colonel Jefferson Davis filled in the hole that had formed in the left flank and pushed the enemy back. The Second Indiana Regiment rallied and joined the fight. General Taylor also called the Third Indiana Regiment to come forward to help the Mississippians.

The Mississippians and the Indianans did not join one another immediately. They each endured an eventful series of encounters with the Mexicans before joining. The Third Indiana Regiment, upon receiving orders to reinforce Davis' Volunteers from Mississippi, left the knoll that they occupied behind Washington's position. As they left the knoll the Mississippi Volunteers, who were now on the left flank, attacked the Mexicans but to no avail. Colonel Davis pulled the troops of his Mississippi Volunteers back. Meanwhile, the Third Indiana Regiment moved toward where they believed Colonel Davis to be positioned. On the way to the Mississippi position, they encountered 2,500 Mexican infantry and 1,000 Mexican Cavalry who were following behind the Infantry. As fortune would have it the Third Indiana Regiment found itself on terrain that the Mexicans could not engage them on. The Third Indiana Regiment was not in the clear though. Unfortunately, there was a Mexican artillery unit that saw the Third Indiana Regiment and opened fire on it. The Mexican artillery missed with their fires. The Third Indiana Regiment returned fire and checked the efforts of the Mexicans. The Third Indiana Regiment then identified Colonel Davis' position and moved to link up with him.

When they arrived at Colonel Davis' position they quickly formed a "V" formation with the open end of the V towards the enemy.³⁶ The V formation fell under the overall control of Colonel Davis of the Mississippi Volunteers and consisted of three

units. The Mississippi Volunteers were on the left side of the V, the remnants of the Second Indiana regiment in the center of the V, and the Third Indiana Regiment, including Sergeant Jefferson Columbus Davis' Company I, was on the right side of the V formation. The V attacked the right flank of the Mexican army. The attack did not happen immediately. The Americans held their fire as the enemy cavalry approached. The approach of the Mexican cavalry was an impressive sight to the Americans as the American forces consisted of Infantry only. The Mexican cavalry came within twenty-five steps of the American position.³⁷ This first contact with the Mexican's was an impressive encounter for Sergeant Jefferson Columbus Davis. The American infantry stood its ground as the Mexican cavalry moved forward. As the Americans stood their ground and opened fire on the Mexicans, the order was given by Colonel Jefferson Davis to charge the Mexicans. The Americans fixed their bayonets and charged into and after the cavalry of the Mexican force. This turned into a rout for the American troops and the Mexicans pulled back from the battlefield.

It was the attack of the V formation that was the first taste of battle for two men named Jefferson Davis, and it was a battle that would inevitably mark the beginning of two Jefferson Davis' long military careers. Colonel Jefferson F. Davis of the Mississippi Volunteers would one day become the president of the Confederate states during the Civil War. Sergeant Jefferson C. Davis, of Company I of the Third Indiana Regiment, would receive an eventual promotion to second lieutenant for his heroics on the battlefield at Buena Vista and achieve the rank of general in the Union forces during the Civil War.

By the late morning of the twenty third of February 1847, the American forces were able to successfully push the Mexican infantry back. As the Mexican army fell back the skies opened up and a rain began to fall. The American artillery batteries continued to fire on the Mexican army. With the artillery falling on his soldiers with deadly accuracy, Santa Anna decided on some more trickery and sent a messenger to General Taylor with terms for an end to the fighting. Receiving the message, General Taylor, in good faith, stopped his guns from continuing their fire on the Mexicans. The Mexicans took this opportunity to reorganize and the Mexican artillery began to fire on the Americans on the left flank again.

Discovering what had happened, General Taylor, had his forces move forward against the Mexicans.³⁸ The advance on the Mexicans was to no avail. The Mexicans rallied their troops together and advanced towards the Americans repelling the attacking American units. It was midafternoon. The initial attack by the Mexicans forced the American line back. General Taylor considered retreat to Monterey but General Wool expressed his opinion that they could still win. "Taylor gave in to his plucky little subordinate."³⁹ In response to this continued fire by the Mexicans, General Taylor committed more of his reserve including the Mississippi Volunteers and the 3rd Indiana Regiment to support them.

By the evening of the twenty third of February 1847, the Mexicans had completely retreated and the battle of Buena Vista was over for the day. The losses of killed or injured were high for the American army: 272 dead and 387 wounded.⁴⁰ During that day the Mexicans had attacked no less than three times and the Americans were able

to successfully repel the attacks. General Taylor was concerned that if the Mexicans attacked the next day that his troops would not be so lucky. For the Third Infantry Regiment the day of battle had taken its toll. The losses for the regiment were nine dead and fifty-six wounded.⁴¹ The next morning, as the sun began to rise, the Americans could look across the field of battle and see that the Mexicans had retreated. It was the twenty fourth of February and the day was spent gathering the dead and burying them and treating those that were wounded.

On the twenty fifth of February, reports from scouts for the American forces reported to General Taylor that the Mexican army had retreated, but had only gone as far as the location that the Americans had occupied at Agua Nueva. As a result, General Taylor had his forces assume battle positions again to await an attack from Santa Anna's forces. All of that day was spent in waiting for the attack of the Mexican Army led by Santa Anna. No attack occurred. The soldiers of the American forces slept and the next day, scouts reported to General Taylor that the Mexican army had left Agua Nueva and retreated to San Luis Potosi. On the twenty sixth of February, the American army moved to occupy Agua Nueva. Here the American troops stayed until the tenth of March 1847 when they returned to Buena Vista. The Third Regiment stayed in Buena Vista until the fourteenth of May at which time it received orders that they were going to return to the United States.

On the twenty fourth of May, the Third Regiment left Buena Vista and began the long ten-day march to Reynosa. Upon arrival in Reynosa the soldiers of the Third Regiment boarded steamboats that took them down the Rio Grande to the Gulf of

Mexico. At the Gulf they boarded boats that took them to New Orleans. Upon arrival in New Orleans there was a tremendous celebration thrown by the citizenry. Following the celebrations and a few weeks in New Orleans, the Third Indiana Regiment was released from the service and all of its members, including Jefferson Columbus Davis left New Orleans on the twenty seventh of June 1847 to return to their homes up the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. The steamboat *The Star Spangled Banner* on which some one hundred and fifty men of the Third Indianans were coming up from New Orleans, struck an underwater snag near Baton Rouge on the twenty ninth of June and sank. Fortunately only the soldier's baggage was lost.⁴²

When the members of the Third Regiment arrived in Indiana they were met with great fanfare.⁴³ The soldiers of the Third Regiment marched in the streets of New Albany. Sergeant Jefferson Columbus Davis was home at last. He was no longer a boy; he was a nineteen-year-old man who was a veteran of war. He had fulfilled the dreams of his youth. He returned to his family farm in Clark County and began working the land.

He worked on the farm for almost a year when he was offered the opportunity to receive a commission as a Second Lieutenant in the Regular Army. The offer of a commission was made to him because of the valor he displayed in the final counterattack against the Mexicans in the war the previous year. Davis saw this as a great opportunity. He always wanted to be a soldier and this was his chance to take hold of his dream. On the seventeenth of June 1848, Davis departed his family farm and traveled to Indianapolis to receive a commission into the United States Army as a field artillery officer.⁴⁴ In July of 1848 he was ordered to report to Governor's Island in New York for training.

¹Jacob P. Dunn, *Indiana and Indianans: A History of Aboriginal and Territorial Indiana and the Century of Statehood*, vol. 4 (Chicago & New York: The American Historical Society, 1919), 1563.

²James B. Fry, *Killed by a Brother Soldier: A Chapter in the History of the War* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1885), 10.

³A. C. McClurg, *Memorial Address for the "Society of the Army of the Cumberland"* Jefferson C. Davis Collection, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana, [1880], 1.

⁴Dunn, 1563.

⁵Oran Perry, *Indiana in the Mexican War* (Indianapolis: Wm. B. Buford, State Printing and Binding, 1908), 47, 414.

⁶*Ibid.*, 406 and 417.

⁷*Ibid.*, 48.

⁸*Ibid.*, 60 and 75.

⁹*Ibid.*, 60.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 82-83.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 87.

¹²*Ibid.*, 61.

¹³*Ibid.*, 71.

¹⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 90.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 98.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 97.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 103.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 107.

²⁰Ibid., 130.

²¹Ibid., 125.

²²Letter dated 18 January 1847 written by Bill who was a friend of Tom Carr (1807 - nd) with note written by Jefferson C. Davis to Tom Carr as part of the same letter. Letter was sent from Saltillo, Mexico, during Mexican War to Tom Carr in Charleston, Clark County, Indiana. Letter found in the Carr Letter collection at the Indiana Historical Society. Comments by Jefferson C. Davis read, "Bill has just way to me I must say to you that I am well and high spirited. I was much grieved to hear of so many weddings and so much insanity but such things will be Tom, Bill looked down hearted a few days after he received yours but is now convalescent and torn do really think all the gals are going to get married soon some boy has vext me with such news (enough of talk) I cant get enough room of room to tell you all I wish. Give my respect to Aunt Hannah and Rebecca to Jim and John and to all the unmarried females in that county and I am still Jeff Davis to Tom Carr." "P.S. Tom I want you to write to me"

²³Carol and Thomas Christenson, *The U.S. - Mexican War* (San Francisco, California: Bay Book and Tapes, Inc., 1998), 152.

²⁴David Lavender, *Climax at Buena Vista: the American Campaigns in Northeastern Mexico 1846-47* (J.B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia and New York, 1966), 176.

²⁵Alfred H. Bill, *Rehearsal for Conflict* (New York: Knopf, 1947), 196.

²⁶Christenson, 154.

²⁷Bill, 197.

²⁸Christenson, 154.

²⁹Lavender, 239.

³⁰Bill, 198.

³¹Samuel E. Chamberlain, *My Confession* (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1956), 115.

³²Christenson, 166.

³³Bill, 198.

³⁴Lavender, 190.

³⁵Christenson, 157.

³⁶Chamberlain, 123.

³⁷Perry, 171.

³⁸Lavender, 206.

³⁹Chamberlain, 124.

⁴⁰Christenson, 160.

⁴¹Perry, 150.

⁴²Ibid., 206.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Dunn, 1563.

CHAPTER 2

A CAREER BEGINS

Upon receiving his commission in June 1848 and reporting to Governor's Island, New York, to receive his initial training as a commissioned officer in the Army, Jefferson C. Davis began a period of ten years of serving at different posts up and down the eastern coast of the United States. In 1852, he was promoted to first lieutenant and in June 1858, he and his company were transferred from Fort Capron on the Indian River in Florida to Fort Moultrie located on Sullivan's Island in Charleston, South Carolina.¹ First Lieutenant Davis was attached to Company E of the 1st Regiment of the United States Artillery.² Fort Moultrie was one of two federal forts in the city of Charleston occupied by government soldiers. The second fort was Fort Sumter. From Davis's arrival at Fort Moultrie in June 1858 to November 1860 when the election for president of the United States took place, things were anything but routine for Davis and the soldiers of Company E.

Davis, with his fiery and combative spirit, took no time in placing himself in a position where the local citizens of Charleston, South Carolina, did not appreciate him. Before the Civil War broke out Davis was involved in an incident that caused these southerners and advocates of slavery to dislike him. It began with the capture of the ship *Echo*, which was laden with a large cargo of Africans who were being brought into the port at Charleston to support the slave trade and industry in 1858. The Africans on board

the ship were removed from the ship and placed under the responsibility of First Lieutenant Davis.³

A problem arose because the slaves had already been purchased and belonged to the citizens in the Charleston community. These citizens felt that the slaves were rightfully their property and that the forces at Fort Moultrie had no right to detain the slaves. Davis refused to release the slaves to the citizens' control and the citizens became increasingly agitated as they waited to gain control of the slaves. The citizens first tried to get a court decision to have the slaves released to their control. A decision passed by the court said that Davis had to release the slaves to their owners. Davis refused to obey the order of the courts. This only caused the citizens of Charleston to become even more agitated. They began to make threats of violence towards Davis and the soldiers at Fort Moultrie, vowing that Davis would not keep them from getting what they owned. All of this was difficult for Davis because he had many friends among the people of Charleston. The citizens continued to threaten violence, but Davis remained calm and stood his ground. Eventually, the Africans were loaded on a ship and returned to Africa.⁴

With the "receipt of the news of the election of Mr. Lincoln" as President of the United States, things began to become unstable in Charleston and the "people flew to arms."⁵ The election caused the Southerners, who did not approve of the election of Lincoln, to become extremely vocal and they began pushing for the succession of the southern states, to include South Carolina, from the Union. These demands of succession created tension between the soldiers of Fort Moultrie and Fort Sumter and the population of the city of Charleston. On the seventh of November 1860, Davis, who was the officer

of the day, was ordered by his senior officers to issue the first cartridges to the guards and had them load and man the guns of Fort Moultrie's battery for what was perceived to be an almost certain attack from the South Carolinians who were angry about the outcome of the election.⁶ The tension continued to grow, as the South Carolinians seemed more and more determined to secede from the Union. The result of the increase in demonstrations towards the fort was cause for an increase in the efforts of Davis and the soldiers of Fort Moultrie to prepare the fort for defense. Preparing the fort for defense was a task that made duties "very arduous to both officers and men."⁷

In the later part of November 1860, Major Robert Anderson was sent to Fort Moultrie on orders to assume command and take charge of the soldiers. With Major Anderson's arrival and assumption of command, Davis was ordered to take charge of the government employees in the Engineer Department and was sent to quietly repair Castle Pinckney. His specific instructions were to repair Castle Pinckney for the possible occupancy of Union troops, should there be a need to send reinforcements to support Fort Moultrie and Fort Sumter. Davis and the engineers working with him accomplished this task in ten days as was desired "amid intense excitement and many threats from the South Carolina people."⁸ When the work at Castle Pinckney was completed, Davis returned to his company at Fort Moultrie.

On the twentieth of December 1860, South Carolina seceded from the Union. The secession of South Carolina from the Union brought great pressure on the soldiers occupying Fort Moultrie. Because the fort was occupied with federal soldiers and South Carolina was declaring its independence the South Carolinians demanded that the federal

soldiers leave the fort and turn it over to South Carolina. Major Anderson, under explicit guidance from the President of the United States, was told not to cause escalation of the affair and to do all that he could to keep the tense situation from exploding into a more serious situation. With this guidance Major Anderson decided that his best course of action was to vacate Fort Moultrie in favor of unfinished Fort Sumter, which was located in the middle of the harbor.⁹ He reasoned that Fort Sumter would provide more isolation for his soldiers from the hostile citizens of Charleston and South Carolina.

To facilitate a smooth and incident free evacuation of Fort Moultrie, Davis was placed in charge of the rear guard to cover the movement of Major Anderson and the rest of the soldiers and officers, totaling about seventy men, from Fort Moultrie to Fort Sumter. The movement from Fort Moultrie to Fort Sumter occurred on the night of the twenty sixth of December 1860. As the commander of the rear guard it was Davis's responsibility to ensure that he and the rear guard provide artillery cover and protection for Anderson and the men as they crossed the waters of the harbor at Charleston.¹⁰ His orders were to sink any South Carolina guard boats that tried to interfere with the operation.¹¹ These were tense moments as discovery by the Southerners of the Union soldiers moving across open waters could have proven an excellent target to engage and an easy way to have taken command of both Fort Moultrie and Fort Sumter. Fortunately, this did not happen and when Major Anderson and his soldiers reached Fort Sumter they gave a signal to First Lieutenant Davis at Fort Moultrie to let them know that they had arrived successfully.

Upon receiving the signal Davis began the final closedown of Fort Moultrie. His final acts at Fort Moultrie included rendering the guns of his battery useless, gathering up the muskets that he and his men had as their personal weapons, cutting down the flag staff, and moving to the rowboats that they had prepositioned on the beaches outside the fort. Upon getting to the boats they deployed them and rowed quietly across the waters of Charleston harbor to the safer confines of Fort Sumter. In traveling across the harbor of Charleston, Davis and his men had to pass close by the enemy gunboats that were anchored. To Davis' surprise and good fortune, the gunboats did not appear to have guards on them standing watch, so their short transit, to their relief, was uneventful.¹²

The next day, the twenty seventh of December 1860, Davis was ordered by Anderson to return back to Fort Moultrie to provide protection for Captain Foster. Captain Foster was returning to the fort to pay workers who had performed repair work on Fort Moultrie for the government. Upon Captain Foster and First Lieutenant Davis's arrival at Fort Moultrie, they found that the fort was still abandoned and that the South Carolinians had not discovered that the Union soldiers had left the night before.¹³ Taking advantage of the situation, Davis had the remaining military capabilities of the fort destroyed. Artillery pieces were damaged beyond usefulness to include the burning of their carriages. What ammunition remained in the fort was destroyed and that ammunition that was usable and could not be carried was removed to Fort Sumter.¹⁴

The movement of the Union troops from Fort Moultrie to Fort Sumter reduced the friction and possibility of physical confrontation between the Union soldiers and the angry southerners. A new problem, however, developed. Living on an island, isolated in

the harbor at Charleston started to create a resource, supply, and reinforcement problem for Davis and the others at Fort Sumter. In January 1861 an attempt was made to get the ship, *Stars of the West*, to Fort Sumter. Its purpose was to bring in supplies and provide relief for the soldiers at the fort. The attempt to get the ship to the fort failed when the Southerners fired their cannons at the ship and forced it to turn around. This was a pivotal moment in the tension in Charleston. Both the Union and the Southerners saw one another trying to provoke or incite hostilities. The Southerners, having declared themselves an independent state, saw the presence of the ship as an infringement on their territorial waters. The Union, seeing their supply ship fired upon, saw the attack as an unprovoked act of aggression. Thus began the siege of Fort Sumter.

Fort Sumter and its 128 occupants (including forty three civilian workers) became the focus of the nation, and it was the major topic of discussion in the newspapers of the day and throughout the cities of both Northern and Southern states.¹⁵ For those in the fort the tension was even greater. They were isolated and had little if any knowledge of the goings-on in the world outside the walls of the fort. They had to be ever vigilant of an impending attack not knowing if, when, and where it would take place. Davis wrote of this period of tension, “during the siege of Fort Sumter. . . I performed the various duties required of a subaltern without a days intermission.”¹⁶ Davis also observed that there was a beehive of activity at all times and that there was a high level of vigilance.¹⁷ Performing at such a high level of tension for the period of time from January to April 1861 was taking its toll on the occupants of the fort. Still, despite their anxieties, they continued to perform their duties and responsibilities.

By early April 1861, it was becoming obvious that those in the fort were running low on rations and supplies. The situation at Fort Sumter intensified and President Lincoln became involved in the situation. In early April of 1861, he sent a ship to provide relief to the soldiers at Fort Sumter. The attempt by Lincoln, like the earlier failed attempt to get the ship the *Stars of the West* to Fort Sumter, was not taken kindly by the southerners in Charleston. As happened earlier, the Southerners viewed the ship as an infringement on territorial waters. A real confrontation was moments away.

On the eleventh of April 1861 the standoff at Fort Sumter came to a head. A group of representatives from South Carolina to include ex-Senator and now Colonel James Chesnut Jr., Lieutenant Colonel A. R. Chisholm and Captain Stephen D. Lee, a West Point graduate, went to Fort Sumter to demand its surrender.¹⁸ When they arrived at Fort Sumter, First Lieutenant Davis met them and escorted them to Major Anderson. The group of representatives delivered a message from Major Anderson's friend and former West Point student, Brigadier General P. G. T. Beauregard. The letter stated that Fort Sumter must be evacuated; that Anderson and his men would be aided on their way; and that, "the flag which you have upheld so long and with so much fortitude . . . may be saluted by you on taking it down." Major Anderson listened but refused their demand and sent back a response that read, "my sense of honor, and my obligations to my government, prevent my compliance." The gentlemen were escorted back to their boat. As the representatives departed Major Anderson's presence, Major Anderson said to them, "if you do not batter us to pieces, we will be starved out in a few days."¹⁹

Late the next night at approximately 3:00 A.M., four officers from the Southern army were sent to Fort Sumter to tell Major Anderson that orders had been received and given to Southern forces in Charleston, from the Southern capital of Montgomery, Alabama, to demand the surrender of Fort Sumter. Again, Major Anderson refused the demand. With that response in hand, the four officers informed Major Anderson that the fort would come under attack within the next hour. Major Anderson stood firm in his position against the demand to surrender the fort. The four officers returned to the city of Charleston and at approximately 4:30 A.M. in the morning of the twelfth of April 1861, the Southerners, manning batteries on James Island, opened fire on the soldiers at Fort Sumter. The Civil War had begun, and Jefferson Columbus Davis was beginning the journey of what would turn out to be four very long years of endless battles.

When the Southern cannons fired on Fort Sumter, the Union cannons responded in kind. The first shot fired from the Union soldiers in Fort Sumter came from Jefferson Davis's commander Captain Abner Doubleday. Doubleday would later write that Davis' battery began firing at almost the same time and that he "soon heard their [Davis' battery of four guns] guns on the opposite side of the fort, echoing my own."²⁰ Davis' battery was on the northwest face of the Fort and opposed what was known at the time as the floating battery.²¹ The floating battery was a houseboat like vessel that carried four siege guns.²² Davis would later write, "This formidable enemy was so completely disabled that it has never been used since."²³

The next morning, Senator Lewis T. Wigfall approached the fort. He requested that Major Anderson have the fort surrender. Major Anderson and the Senator discussed

surrender that morning and in the afternoon of the thirteenth of April 1861, Fort Sumter was surrendered. After thirty-four hours of bombardment in which the confederates had fired more than 3,000 shells, the siege was over. The federal soldiers of Fort Sumter left the fort the next day with their banners flying, their eight musicians playing "Yankee Doodle," and they boarded the ship named *Baltic*.²⁴ The *Baltic* left the port of Charleston and sailed north to New York City. In New York City, the soldiers of Major Anderson's command were given a hero's welcome and awarded medals that commemorated their defending Fort Sumter and the siege that they had endured.²⁵ Following the ceremony in New York City, First Lieutenant Jefferson C. Davis received orders to return to his home state of Indiana and report to Indianapolis. There he was to assume the responsibility of mustering officers for the army.

¹Information found at the Indiana State Library in a folder containing receipts and other documents collected from Jefferson C. Davis. Receipts identify where he was located during this period of time as they identify dates and locations of Jefferson Davis' assignments. Indiana State Library, Indianapolis, Indiana.

²Jefferson C. Davis, *Personal Account of Civil War Experience to Commanding Officer*, (Indianapolis, Indiana: Indiana Historical Society, 4 January 1866), 1.

³A. C. McClurg, *Memorial Address for the "Society of the Army of the Cumberland"* Jefferson C. Davis Collection, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana, [1880], 2.

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵Davis, 1.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸Davis, 2.

⁹John G. Leydon, "The Other Jefferson Davis," *Civil War, the Magazine of the Civil War Society*, no. 58 (August 1996): 20.

¹⁰Davis, 2.

¹¹Leydon, 22.

¹²Davis, 2.

¹³R. U. Johnson and C. C. Buel, *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, vol. 1, part 2 (New York: The Century Company, 1888), 46.

¹⁴Abner Doubleday, *Reminiscences of Forts Sumter and Moultrie in 1860-1861* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1876), 69.

¹⁵Sergeant Dalzell, "Indiana Jeff Davis was Sumter Officer," *The Indianapolis News*, 11 April 1961, 8.

¹⁶Davis, 3.

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸Dalzell, 8.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰Doubleday, 126.

²¹Davis, 3.

²²Doubleday, 127.

²³Davis, 3.

²⁴Leydon, 22.

²⁵McClurg, 3.

CHAPTER 3

PEA RIDGE

Davis arrived in Indianapolis, Indiana on the first of May 1861. To his chagrin, upon his arrival, he received additional orders from the War Department. The orders stated that in addition to his duties as mustering officer for enlisted soldiers for the State of Indiana Volunteers that he would also be responsible for performing duties as the commissary and quartermaster for the mustered soldiers.¹ Davis was given the responsibility because he was a regular army officer and had performed similar duties as a Lieutenant while stationed at Fort Moultrie and Fort Sumter. During mustering, regular army officers were held in high esteem. In the confusion of trying to put together a force of soldiers it was a welcome sight to have a regular army officer at the state level. Davis assumed his responsibilities without hesitation, opened up his office, and performed his duties well.²

On the sixteenth of May 1861, Davis received a commission that promoted him from first lieutenant to captain. Shortly thereafter Lieutenant Colonel T. J. Wood of the Cavalry Corps arrived in Indianapolis, "much to Davis' gratification and to the advantage of the service," and relieved Captain Davis of the mustering duty responsibilities. This allowed Davis to focus his attention on the duties of commissary officer and quartermaster for the Indiana Volunteers.³ Davis was a stickler for details and kept detailed records of the transactions he made as commissary officer and quartermaster,

often noting details of events and reasons for providing commissary or quartermaster provisions to requesting units.⁴

As time passed, Davis became tired of the daily staff work of commissary officer and quartermaster and found himself longing to return to his real preference of active service, that of being in the field especially “now that war seemed inevitable to preserve the union.”⁵ He offered his services to command a unit of Indiana Volunteers to the Governor of the state of Indiana Oliver P. Morton a very close friend of Davis and his family. In frustration, Davis waited for a response to his request. His wishes were fulfilled in late July and early August of 1861, when his request was “favorably considered” and granted “after the fall of the gallant [Lyon’s defeat] at Wilson’s Creek in Missouri.”⁶ There was concern generated by the loss at Wilson Creek because the loss meant tensions were getting worse and moving further west. The safety of St. Louis was in jeopardy. Because of this concern, General Fremont, who was in charge of the department, made appeals to the Western states to send troops forward. General Fremont’s concern prompted the acceptance of Davis’s application for command of the Indiana Volunteers. In the middle of August of 1861, Governor Morton tendered Davis the command of the Twenty Second Regiment of the Indiana Volunteers.⁷

The Twenty Second Regiment Indiana was mustered into service at Madison, Indiana, on the thirteenth of August 1861, and Davis received an “appointment and commission to the rank of Colonel in and for the Twenty Second Regiment of the Indiana Volunteer militia by Governor Oliver P. Morton” that was dated to take effect on the second of August 1861.⁸ On the fifteenth and sixteenth of August, after a few hours of

delay at Indianapolis enroute to St. Louis, Davis reported to General Fremont in St. Louis.⁹

From the sixteenth of August through the twenty eighth of August, Davis spent time organizing, equipping, disciplining, drilling, and instructing both officers and enlisted men. On the twenty eighth of August, in compliance with orders that he received, Davis succeeded Brigadier General Grant in command of all of the forces in northwestern Missouri, with his headquarters established in Jefferson City, Missouri.¹⁰ By the first of September, Davis' command consisted of about 12,000 men which by the twentieth of September had increased to 18,000 to 20,000 men, mostly concentrated in the Jefferson City area.¹¹ Again, Davis continued to organize, equip, discipline, drill and instruct both officers and enlisted men, and outfit them for the field. His command was large in number, and "a more motley troop has probably never since been seen. They were all sorts, from well-drilled battalions to bands of recruits gathered round some popular local leader and numbering perhaps as high as two thousand in one regiment."¹²

Confederate troops under Generals Price and McCullough were near to Davis' location. The Confederates were camped in large detachments along the south side of the Osage River and numbered as many as 16,000 strong. The position of the Confederates gave them a vantage from which they had equal probability of attacking Jefferson City, Booneville, and Lexington. The position also gave the Confederate troops a vantage from which to conduct recruiting and foraging over a wide range of territory and still have good security.¹³ This close proximity of Confederate soldiers to Davis' position in Jefferson City made him and the citizen population of the city uneasy. In response to the

uneasiness, Davis had his soldiers build fortifications around the city for protection in case the Confederates attacked. By the middle of September 1861, the fortifications were complete. With security in place Davis developed a plan to campaign against the Confederate troops on the Osage River. He submitted his campaign plan, which involved the area from Jefferson City to Warsaw, to General Fremont.

General Fremont saw Davis' plan as a very favorable plan, but did not provide him the boats and teams that he needed to transport troops on the river. As a result, on the twentieth of September 1861, the union soldiers in Lexington, numbering 3,500 under the command of Colonel J. A. Mulligan, were attacked and defeated by General Price's forces. This angered and frustrated Davis as he believed that had he had the support he requested and that had the plan he submitted to General Fremont been accepted, that Lexington would not have been captured.¹⁴

Autumn closed on Davis and his soldiers in Jefferson City, Missouri. Following the fall of Lexington to the Confederate, the Union forces found themselves conducting more movements. Davis' received the orders to use his forces to repair the Pacific railroads that had been damaged and destroyed in many places by the Confederate troops. Davis was also ordered to repair the roads forward in the direction of Georgetown and Sedalia. By the first of October, Davis' troops had completed their missions and Davis placed a concentration of 6,000 soldiers at these two locations. This show of force caused General Price to move his troops back beyond the Osage River.¹⁵

About this time General Fremont issued orders that reorganized the Army of the South West. Under these orders Davis was moved to the new position of brigade

commander in Brigadier General John Pope's Division. Reorganized, General Fremont advanced his forces towards Springfield, Missouri. General Price, seeing the size of the Union force, retreated further to the south beyond Springfield. The Union forces stopped in Springfield and set up camp. The failure of General Fremont to pursue General Price resulted in General Fremont shortly thereafter being relieved of his command. Replacing him was General David Hunter. General Hunter ordered the troops to return to their supply depots on the railroads. This resulted in General Popes forces, under which Davis' brigade fell, crossing back over the Osage River and making camp at Sedalia, Otterville and Syracuse. The whole movement took the month of October to complete.

As winter approached the Union forces took up winter camp of instruction at the crossing of the Pacific railroad and the Lamine River with the headquarters for this camp established in Otterville. Approximately "18,000 troops of all branches of the service were concentrated and commenced preparing winter quarters" at the instruction camp.¹⁶ Colonel Davis was selected over other colonels who had date of rank on him to be placed in charge of this camp of instruction. Conducting the camp was a difficult task as there were not many men among the Union soldiers who knew how to teach drill and discipline. Davis attacked the responsibility of drilling the soldiers with great energy despite the lack of teachers and the antagonism and noncooperation he received from many of the colonels who he outranked and who had previously worked for him. The conflict with his fellow colonels made Davis' position and dealings with officers very difficult and unpleasant.¹⁷ General Halleck, who had recently replaced General Hunter,

settled the issue between Davis and the colonels. General Halleck had Brigadier General Pope assume Davis' responsibilities and he then placed Davis in command of a division.

On the thirteenth of December 1861, Brigadier General Pope's command set out on what was later to be termed the Blackwater Expedition. The purpose of the expedition was to intercept and capture a large detachment of Confederate soldiers that were moving from the northwestern Missouri area to join with General Price south of the Osage River.

Davis displayed his aggressive warrior desires by insisting urgently to Brigadier General Pope that his division be designated a part of the expedition. In an autobiographical account of his career during the Civil War, Davis wrote of his role in the Blackwater Expedition.

On receiving the order I broke camp at 9 o'clock at night and marched 18 miles by daylight in the morning. At Sedalia, Colonel Steele joined his forces with mine and the cavalry under Colonel Brown. The whole commanded by General Pope in person set out from Sedalia on the 13th. The enemy eluded our movement in every instance until the afternoon of the 18th when I volunteered to take command of the 350 cavalry forming our advanced guard, and after ordering our division into camp, went in pursuit of a detachment of the enemy report a few miles below us on the Blackwater. After a rapid march of 10 miles I came upon the enemies pickets and drove them precipitately in upon his main force. The river intervened between the enemy's camp and us and could only be crossed by the bridge, Kirkpatrick's, which was guarded by a strong force. This was immediately charged and carried with a loss of over 20 men on each side. Crossing the bridge as a charge under fire of the enemy's main line, the troops formed lines and advanced within close range of musketry. The charge was successful but the enemy at this juncture raised a flag of truce and requested a parley; this I refused. Then he unconditionally surrendered.

The force that surrendered amounted to near 1,000 men armed and equipped, with 75 wagons that were heavily laden with ammunition and provisions. The loss in this little engagement was very small considering the result. Its effect on the troops composing this expedition was very beneficial. Campaigning in Missouri up to that time had been exceedingly unsuccessful and discouraging. On the return of the expedition a few days subsequent, my troop returned to their former camps near Otterville. The duty of proceeding to St.

Louis with the prisoners captured during the expedition fell upon me and without delay I proceeded to that place and report to Gen. Halleck then Dept Commander who was at this time maturing his plans of campaigning against Price at Springfield and Island No. 10.¹⁸

Davis' performance during the Blackwater Expedition was exceptional. With the aggressiveness that he was known to have he pursued the Confederates till he was successful. General Pope would later write of Davis' exploits, "the forces under General Jeff. C. Davis behaved with great gallantry, and the conduct of Davis was distinguished. I desire to present him to special notice."¹⁹ Davis' success also had an enormous effect on the morale of the soldiers of the Union army who were in Missouri. Till the time of Davis' successful expedition the union cause, for the most part, had not generated any event that would cause them to feel that their efforts were worthwhile.²⁰

Following the drafting of his campaign plan to wage war against Confederate General Price in Springfield, Missouri, General Halleck determined that it would not be enough to send just the forces under General Curtis to attack General Price. He determined that another division would be required. Meanwhile, Colonel Davis was returning from St Louis, which is where he had taken the prisoners he had captured during the Blackwater Expedition. General Halleck, after serious contemplation and consideration of the difficulty of the march over the rough and virtually impassable roads of Missouri during this time of the year, made the decision. He selected Davis' experienced division from General Pope's Command.

On the twenty fourth of January, after getting his division equipped and a supply train loaded and outfitted with the provisions they would need for the next expedition,

Davis started for the Osage River enroute to join with General Curtis who was moving towards Springfield, Missouri. As was anticipated, the movement over the roads of Missouri to join with General Curtis proved to be difficult for Davis and his division. January had proved to be warmer than usual and the dirt roads leading to the Osage River, with the large amount of traffic of the division passing over them, quickly became quagmires and virtually impossible to proceed over. This predicament slowed the division's progress but did not stop Davis from pushing his soldiers to make the march to the Osage River. Davis ordered his soldiers to reduce the loads on the wagons and destroy all that they could not carry with them.²¹

Davis' division reached the Osage River at Linn Creek and found the stream to be about 15 feet in depth, which was deeper than he had anticipated. He also found the creek to be full of floating ice. Over the next three days it snowed and sleeted continuously and with the use of two small boats, Davis' troops crossed the creek.²² The crossing was long and arduous, but successful. Davis continued to move his division and joined with General Curtis' forces in Lebanon, Missouri. After a few days of delay they moved onto Springfield. As part of General Curtis' forces, Davis' Division was now assigned to the Army of the Southwest and designated the 3rd Division. Davis' division was one of four divisions of two brigades each, and there was also an additional special reserve.²³

Davis' Division was put in the lead of Curtis' forces as they pressed the Confederate forces under General Price towards Springfield. On the eleventh of February, about six miles from Springfield, in the vicinity of Piper's Farm, Davis'

soldiers encountered pickets from the enemy and after a brief but hotly fought fight they drove the enemy pickets past Kickapoo, Missouri.²⁴ The successful small victory over the enemy was key as it resulted in the securing of the high ground that would allow the Union forces to prepare, with an advantage, for the anticipated battle that was to occur the next morning with the Confederate forces. The battle the next day, however, was not to be. General Price, assessing the situation, retreated from Springfield and Davis and his division moved in and occupied the city.

Once a course of action as to how to pursue was decided upon, Davis and his division were given the mission to lead the continued pursuit of General Price and his force. Davis pushed his unit, covering twenty-six miles of hard marching through the area where the battle at Wilson's Creek had occurred and overcame General Price's forces at Crane Creek. Seeing Davis' forces, General Price formed his lines for battle and waited the attack by Davis. Davis did not push the attack. Nighttime was closing in and the supporting element for his attack, a force under the command of Colonel Sigel that had supposedly been moving in a parallel path with Davis' forces, was not in place to support an attack. By morning, Sigel's forces still were not in position. In disgust, Davis did not attack, as he did not believe it wise to do so. Thus, Price continued his retreat.²⁵

Price continued with his 8,000 soldiers towards Cassville, Missouri, where Davis, who was continuing to pursue, forced Price to again form battle lines. As had just happened a few days previously, Sigel's forces were not available to support Davis's forces and again Price was able to continue his retreat. Davis continued to pursue Price and after three days of pursuit, in the vicinity of Keetsville, he received orders from

General Halleck to assume command of all of the cavalry forces (numbering around 2,000) and pushed the enemy. Davis placed his division camp and took command of the cavalry and immediately went after the Confederate forces. By nightfall of that day he and his cavalry had come upon the rear guard of the enemy forces. The Confederates consisted of an infantry brigade and a battery of artillery that was in a defiladed position in an area on the Missouri and Arkansas border called Crossed Timbers. Davis immediately ordered a charge and after a ferocious battle, successfully overtook the position and routed the Confederate rear guard.²⁶

The next day, the Union forces continued their pursuit of the Confederates and participated in fighting all the way to Cross Hollows, Arkansas. It was here that Price was able to join forces with General McCulloch's forces and they attempted to make a stand against the Union forces. The Union forces proved too much for them and Price, McCulloch and their forces retreated even further towards Fort Smith, Arkansas. Thus the Army of the Southwest was now in possession of all of the resources and land in the vicinity of Fayetteville, Arkansas.²⁷

The Union forces under Curtis, after their almost six week pursuit of the forces under Price, took up camp and headquartered in the vicinity of Cross Hollow, Arkansas. They used this opportunity to replenish supplies and recuperate from the long period of pursuit. While the Union forces reequipped and outfitted themselves in preparation for further battles, the Confederate forces under Price and McCulloch joined forces under the command of General Van Dorn, commander of the Trans-Mississippi Department.

Under Van Dorn's command, these two generals found themselves with reinforcements

and decided to conduct an attack on the Union forces that were camped at Cross Hollow. On the first of March, after assessing the situation, General Curtis determined that Cross Hollow was not the place that he wanted to do battle with the Confederate troops and had his forces fall back. They marched all day to an area called Pea Ridge. Colonel Davis' division took up a position just to the north of Little Sugar Creek, and covered the main road that led from Fayetteville, Arkansas past Pea Ridge, towards Springfield. This road was called Telegraph Road. It was the fifth of March.

On the morning of the sixth of March, Davis employed the first brigade of his division under the command of Colonel Thomas Pattison consisting of the Eighth, Eighteenth, and Twenty Second and Klauss' Second Battery on the right of the Telegraph Road watching the approach to the road. On the left of the road he emplaced the Second Brigade that was under the command of Colonel Julius White and consisted of the Thirty Seventh, and Fifty Ninth (formerly the Ninth Missouri) along with Davidson's battery. Davidson's battery had a good position from which it could see down the Little Sugar Creek to the east and west as well as provide strong support for Klauss' battery that was on the right. Davis positioned himself on the left of the road.²⁸ In preparation for the expected attack on the position that Davis occupied, he had his troops reinforce their positions by building abatis and parapets (Eighth and Eighteenth under Lieutenant Colonel's Benton and Washburn) from trees that they cut down. He also had one of his batteries (Davidson's Battery), located in the rear near the bridge over Little Sugar Creek, dig entrenchments.²⁹

During the night of the sixth of March the Union forces rested and waited in position for the inevitable attack that was to come from the 18,000 Confederate troops under the command of Price. Davis' division of 3,000 soldiers was in the center of the Union position on both sides of Telegraph Road and just behind or north of Little Sugar Creek. To Davis' left was a division led by Colonel Carr, which on the fifth of March had moved from Cross Hollows and crossed Little Sugar Creek to the position it currently occupied. To Davis' right was the division of Colonel Peter J. Osterhaus and to Osterhaus' right was the division of General Alexander Asboth. General Curtis had his forces arrayed in this way and oriented to the south, as he believed that the Confederates would attack head-on into the Union forces.

It was obvious after reports started coming in during the early hours of the morning of the seventh of March that the Confederates were not going to attack the Union forces head on but were maneuvering to the northeast and were going to attack from the rear. With this information, General Curtis called a meeting of Davis and the other division commanders at 8 o'clock in the morning to update them on the situation and to task them to reposition themselves for the attack that was going to come from the northeast. Osterhaus took a brigade of his command as well as a battery and moved them to support the cavalry as they defended to the northwest. As it happened they met the forces of confederate Brigadier Generals Ben McCulloch and James McIntosh that numbered approximately 11,500. Osterhaus' forces supported the cavalry and slowed the attack of McCulloch's and McIntosh's forces. Observing what was taking place, General Curtis gave orders to Davis to move to support Osterhaus' attack. Seeing the attack that

was taking place on Osterhaus' forces and the potential that they might be defeated by the Confederate troops that far outnumbered them, Davis moved his division on the right of Osterhaus' in the vicinity of Leetown.

Davis had his forces engage McCullock's forces on their left flank. He led the attack with Second Brigade, specifically the Thirty Seventh and Fifty Ninth Illinois assisted by Davidson's battery. Because of heavy fire and the pressure that the Confederates were putting on Second Brigade, Davis assumed the Confederates were reinforcing themselves. Seeing that Second Brigade alone could not hold the fight he then moved the Eighteenth and Twenty Second in to the fight to make a flank movement to the right and to attack. This was accomplished, but not before the Second Brigade began to pull back under excessive fires from the Confederate forces. As the Second Brigade pulled back, the Confederates began to exult in their success. Their exulting was soon ended as the Eighteenth opened up with heavy fire on the rear forces of the Confederates. This allowed the Second Brigade to reform its lines and once again engage in the fight. The reappearance of the Second Brigade of Davis' Division caused the Confederates to turn and flee the field of battle.³⁰ It was a tremendous engagement that resulted in many killed and wounded. "It's [Davis' Division] energetic advance turned a very critical moment into a decisive victory of our arms. McCullock and McIntosh fell while leading their troops in a furious attack against Osterhaus and Davis."³¹ The third officer who succeeded command from the fallen generals, Colonel Hebert, was captured and taken as a prisoner.

The death of these two Confederate generals was an obvious blow to the soldiers that they led. The generals' deaths and the disarray that the Confederate troops were put into at this location of the battle would not have happened unless Davis, in his coolness and bravery had not led the aggressive attack and maneuvered his forces as well as he did. The Confederates on the left side of the Union forces had not had success. The Confederate forces attacking and engaged in battle with the right side of the Union force were having great success. They were pushing the Union forces back and forced them to abandon the Elkhorn Tavern and take up positions in woods which were separated from the Confederate troops by open fields. To their good fortune, the Confederates did not attack and night soon settled upon them.³² Davis finished the day with his division positioned in the vicinity of Leetown and had them "bivouac on the field they had just so gloriously won."³³

During the night of the seventh of March, Davis received a message to see General Curtis. Davis reported to General Curtis from his position in Leetown and was given orders to take up a position in the morning near Pea Ridge on Telegraph Road where Colonel Carr's division had been located after the fight on the seventh. Davis followed the orders and moved his division to this location, a location that was in the possession of the enemy. He arrayed his forces so that one of his brigades under the command of Colonel Pattison was on the right of Telegraph Road. He had Klauss's battery positioned in the center of his division force, and his Second Brigade under the command of Colonel White on the left-hand side of Telegraph Road. White's brigade was supported by Davidson's battery.³⁴

The early morning hours of the eighth of March were quiet for Davis and his division. At about 6:30 A.M., the silence was broken by the loud sounds of the shots being fired from the cannons of Davidson's battery supporting White's brigade of Davis' division. The Confederates were attacking again. This lasted for several hours. Davis' division was in the fight again, this time meeting the initial attack of the Confederates. The battery fires continued for a couple of hours when Davis commanded his division to assault and they retook the high ground of Pea Ridge and in the process captured two pieces of artillery.³⁵ This ended the involvement of Davis' Division at Pea Ridge.

The success at Pea Ridge for the Union forces cannot be overstated. It was a victory that forced the Confederates out of the southwest and back to Fort Smith, Arkansas. The victory brought peace to the people of Missouri for the next two years of the Civil War.

Following the victory at Pea Ridge the Union forces under General Curtis began a campaign into central Arkansas. Davis found this to be a difficult campaign because it took place during the month of April and during this period it was very difficult to forage off the land for food. Contact with the enemy during this time was minimal and was primarily against little guerilla bands. In late May, Davis received a letter from the Adjutant General's office in Washington appointing him to the rank of Brigadier General of Volunteers, dated 3 May 1862.³⁶

On the tenth of May 1862, while making camp approximately ten miles south of Batesville, Arkansas, Davis received orders to march his troops to Cape Girardeau enroute to a final destination of Corinth, Mississippi. Davis immediately moved his

division towards Cape Girardeau. By the twentieth of May it had reached Cape Girardeau having averaged twenty-four miles per day over very rough and rugged terrain (a total of two hundred and forty miles in ten days). Davis' division remained at Cape Girardeau for two days so that the soldiers could be paid and so that the quartermaster could issue the soldiers complete uniforms.

From Cape Girardeau Davis's Division boarded boats and traveled to Pittsburgh Landing, Tennessee where they off-loaded on the twenty forth of May and marched to Corinth and took up position on the front.³⁷ It was here that Davis' and his division fell under General Pope and participated in the siege of Corinth till the twenty ninth of May when the Confederates evacuated the city. Davis' force assisted in the pursuit of the Confederates. Davis' force then returned to Corinth and went into camp at Winter Creek and remained there for a few days. Shortly thereafter, General Rosecrans, who had recently taken over command from General Pope, issued orders to Davis to conduct reconnaissance of the left flank of Union occupied territory to identify any possible movement of the enemy. Davis set up an observation post to meet this requirement.

In the middle of June the Confederates began to make movement in the direction of Holly Springs. Davis received orders to move his division towards Ripley. Upon receipt of the orders, Davis immediately moved his forces as directed though the hot and almost unbearable temperatures of the June sun. When Davis was within twelve miles of Ripley he received another order. This order was for him to turn his forces around and march them to a camp at Jacinto. He arrived in Jacinto on the third of July. The total

length of the march for Davis' forces was one hundred and thirty and for the most part it was again uneventful except for the occasional skirmish with small bands of guerillas.

It was now the end of July 1862 and the constant participation in war since the attack on Fort Sumter was starting to take its toll on Davis' health. He was feeling himself becoming physically impaired. As a result, on the twenty eighth of July 1862, he submitted a letter to General Rosecrans requesting that he be granted a leave of absence, and General Rosecrans responded favorably in the middle of August to his request.³⁸

General:

After twenty one months of arduous service in the present was commencing in Charleston Harbor last Nov. a year ago. I find myself compelled by physical weakness and exhaustion to ask the department for a few weeks respite from duty.

The troops under my command have participated in every campaign made by the army of the southwest since the commencement of the war in Indiana and Arkansas.

Between the 10th and 24th of May I transferred my command from White river Arkansas to Corinth; since which time they have participated in all operations against the enemy in this vicinity during this time. In fact, since the breaking out of the rebellion I have not been able to secure a single days' relaxation from duty.

I am at last compelled to seek rest for a few days at least. My future usefulness in service depends upon my health, which is much impaired and must have an opportunity to recuperate.

I hope that the department will see the necessity and justice of my request and favor me with an early reply.

I am, very respectfully your obedient servant, Jeff C. Davis, Brig Gen.

August 12, 1862

Special Order No. 208, by order of General Rosecrans, Headquarters,
Army of the Miss.

Leave of absence on Surgeons Certificate is hereby granted to Brig General Jeff C.
Davis for seventy days

¹Jefferson C. Davis, Personal Account of Civil War Experience to Commanding Officer, (Indianapolis, Indiana: Indiana Historical Society, 4 January 1866), 3-4.

²A. C. McClurg, *Memorial Address for the "Society of the Army of the Cumberland"* Jefferson C. Davis Collection, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana, [1880], 4.

³Davis, 4.

⁴Authors observation based on review of numerous files of transaction receipts between Jefferson C. Davis and requesting officers. These files can be found at the Indiana State Library in Indianapolis, Indiana.

⁵Davis, 4.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Davis, 5.

⁸Commissioning Orders for Colonel Jefferson C. Davis, 2 August 1861, transcript in the possession of the Indiana Historical Society Library, Indianapolis, Indiana.

⁹McClurg, 4.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Davis, 5.

¹²McClurg, 4.

¹³Davis, 6.

¹⁴Ibid., 7.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., 8.

¹⁷Ibid., 9.

¹⁸Ibid., 9-11.

¹⁹*O.R.*, vol. 8, part 1, 37.

²⁰McClurg, 6.

²¹Davis, 13.

²²Ibid.

²³Major General Franz Sigel, U. S. V., *The Pea Ridge Campaign, Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, vol. 1, part 2 (New York: The Century Company, 1888), 316.

²⁴Davis, 13.

²⁵Ibid., 14.

²⁶Ibid., 14 – 15.

²⁷Ibid., 16.

²⁸Jefferson C. Davis, to William S. Rosecrans, 13 March 1862, transcript in the possession of the Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana.

²⁹Sigel, 317.

³⁰Davis, Letter to Rosecrans.

³¹Sigel, 324.

³²Ibid., 325.

³³Davis, Letter to Rosecrans.

³⁴Sigel, 325.

³⁵Davis, 17.

³⁶Commissioning Orders for Brigadier General Jefferson C. Davis, 3 May 1863, transcript in the possession of the Indiana Historical Society Library, Indianapolis, Indiana.

³⁷McClurg, 7.

³⁸Jefferson C. Davis; and William S. Rosecrans, both letters in the possession of the Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana.

CHAPTER 4

THE DEATH OF A GENERAL

Upon the granting of the twenty days of leave of absence by General Rosecrans, Davis handed over his command to Brigadier General Robert Mitchell. That same day Davis' command, under the command of Mitchell, broke camp and marched for Tennessee to join forces and reinforce the Army of the Ohio under the command of General Don Carlos Buell. Buell's forces were in the process of moving on Chattanooga, Tennessee, from their recent participation of the siege at Corinth.¹ Davis left his command and returned to Indiana. There is speculation as to why Davis really went home. He may have been physically exhausted, but he may also have been homesick. Davis had been married only the year before and had not had a chance to spend any time with his wife.² Regardless of the specifics for the reason he went home, Davis, while on his twenty days of recuperation heard word that there was an imminent invasion of Kentucky by Confederate General Braxton Bragg and Major General Kirby Smith.

Bragg had had a successful month of campaigning in September of 1862 and had taken Munfordville, pushed on to Bardstown, and was threatening an attack on Louisville.³ Earlier, in July of 1862, General Buell had been concerned about the railroad between the cities of Louisville and Chattanooga, a distance of over 300 miles of track. There was a necessity that the railroad be kept open, as it was the main supply line for the supplies that the Union forces needed to conduct their operations. Because of the difficulty in keeping the railroad open General Buell had Major General William Nelson,

and the Forth Division which he commanded, detach from the occupation of Corinth to protect the supply lines in Kentucky with orders that read, "to take command and re-establish and protect the Union's line of supply."⁴ Nelson was someone that Buell trusted implicitly and in whom he had great confidence. Nelson arrived in Louisville and he found that he was not going to be in command but rather that he was going to be second in command and working for General Horatio G. Wright, who without General Buell's knowledge had been placed by President Lincoln in command of the Military Department (Army of the Ohio) in which Kentucky lay.⁵

Nelson was an officer who had distinguished himself well to this point in the Civil War. He was a man who was deeply instilled with the principles of obedience and constant vigilance. He stood six feet two inches tall and weighed almost 300 pounds and was never hesitant to push his weight around and among former naval officers, the brash Nelson had been given the nickname "Bull."⁶ Of most importance was that he was effective and was cited by the War Department as having done wonders with the undisciplined masses of volunteers that he mustered into regiments in Kentucky.⁷

When the war broke out, Nelson was a thirty-six-year-old lieutenant in the Navy from the state of Kentucky who found himself behind a desk in the Washington Navy Yard. This frustrated him, so he offered up his services to the War Department and in July of 1861 they gave him the responsibility to return to Kentucky to muster as many regiments as he could for service in the Federal Army.⁸ Nelson attacked this responsibility with vigor, and in September of 1861 he was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General of Volunteers and given the command of all of the Union forces, six

regiments, in Kentucky and East Tennessee. Shortly thereafter, Nelson was placed in charge of the Forth Division in Buell's Army of the Ohio. Nelson was promoted to Major General of Volunteers shortly after the superb performance of his division in the battle of Shiloh in early April 1862. It was in July of 1862 that Buell detached Nelson and his 4th Division to go to Louisville to protect the railroad lines.⁹

Nelson's arrival in Louisville on the twenty third of August was uneventful. With him he had two batteries of artillery and experienced infantry and cavalry officers to carry out his mission of organizing such forces as were in Kentucky to re-open the rail and telegraph lines.¹⁰ Shortly after his arrival in Louisville and having understood the established chain of command, Nelson was ordered to take field command with his headquarters to be located at Lexington, Kentucky. Nelson then sent a telegram to General Halleck requesting advice on what to do about the orders he had received from Buell to secure the supply lines. This message received no response so he proceeded as ordered by Wright.¹¹

While Nelson was establishing his responsibilities the Confederates, under General Kirby Smith, were annihilating the Union forces under the command of General Mahlon D. Manson at Richmond, Kentucky. The soldiers under Manson's command who were from Indiana, had been newly raised by the governor of Indiana Oliver P. Morton, and were no match for the battle-hardened and veteran Confederate forces. Nelson, hearing of what was happening to Manson's command, marched his forces fifty-two miles to the battle and rallied the scattered Indiana forces along with his own troops and engaged the Confederate troops of General Smith at the town of Richmond, but was

defeated by the Confederate attack. It was the thirtieth of August. In the battle with the Confederate forces Nelson suffered a wound and was carried to a hospital while General Manson was captured. Nelson upon recuperation was ordered to return to Louisville to prepare its defense.¹²

After the battle at Richmond, Kentucky, the Confederates moved on and captured Lexington and Frankfort, Kentucky, and seemed an imminent threat to Louisville and Cincinnati.¹³ Nelson found himself responsible for the defense of Louisville while General Horatio G. Wright, whose headquarters was in Cincinnati, looked after the defense of that city. The Confederates decided not to attack the two cities of Louisville and Cincinnati and scattered forces throughout northern Kentucky to gather recruits and supplies.

While the events were going on around Louisville and Cincinnati, General Davis was still on his leave of absence. Davis, through news reports, received word of the Confederate surge into Kentucky as well as the news that there was a shortage of general officers to command the Union forces against this Confederate push. Feeling somewhat recuperated as well as understanding the graveness of the situation, Davis volunteered to terminate his leave and report to General Wright in Cincinnati. Against doctor's advice to rest longer, Davis made his way to Cincinnati and reported to General Wright requesting that he be put into service. Davis would write, "The great sensation it [appearance of Bragg and Kirby] produced in the surrounding states induced me to give up the remaining portion of my leave and report to General Wright . . . for duty."¹⁴

Wright accepted Davis's request and had him report to General Nelson who was

headquartered in Louisville. Nelson's quarters and offices were located in one of the city's leading hotels, the Galt House, at the north end of the west corridor, on the first or main floor. His adjutant general's office was in room number 12, and his medical director's office was in room number 10.¹⁵ Nelson upon having Davis report to him, gave him the job of organizing and arming the "home guard."¹⁶

Davis was a small blue-eyed man. When seen in civilian clothes it was hard to believe that he was one who had commanded thousands of troops in combat. He was five feet seven inches in height and weighed 125 pounds with sallow complexion and a dyspeptic look.¹⁷ Though somewhat of a quiet and introspective person, he had built the reputation over his career of being a tough commander with his troops when he had to be and was known to have a temper on occasion that would sometimes get the best of him.¹⁸

Both Nelson and Davis were men of distinct personalities that when put together it seemed imminent that they would have a personality conflict. To add to the difference in their personalities, there were other issues which would also perhaps contribute to the their confrontational relationship. Based on the experiences that Davis had had in combat it was obvious that he would not enjoy the task that he had been given by Nelson. In fact, those such as Davis who were from Indiana did not hold the name of Nelson who was a Kentuckian in high esteem. Nelson had blamed the huge defeat at Richmond, Kentucky on the stupidity and disobedience of General Manson, one of Governor Morton's military appointees.¹⁹ The fact that the Indiana forces had fled, it was felt in Indiana, was not Manson's fault but was Nelson's fault as he was the field commander.

Davis also may have had some personal issue with Nelson. Davis, a veteran of the Mexican War as well as many successful battles of the Civil War, may have felt that it was not appropriate for him to be under the authority of a man such as Nelson who had spent most of his career in the Navy and had only been in charge of army troops for a short while. Davis may have also thought that it was beneath him, a veteran of successful campaigns throughout Missouri and Arkansas, to be placed in a position where he was training soldiers.

Nelson's regard for those who were from Indiana was obviously not of the highest level. He felt that the Indianans had failed at Richmond. Nelson even described the people from the state of Indiana as uncouth descendants of "poor trash" from mountains of Kentucky, Tennessee, and North Carolina. He even claimed that his brother Tom, who was the Minister to Mexico and had once lived in Indiana, had lost all of his manners as his favorite method of relaxing was to sit with his feet on the mantelpiece.²⁰

Two days after receiving the assignment from Nelson to muster the city's loyalist citizens, Davis was asked to visit Nelson at the Galt House to report on the status of the mustering of the loyalist citizens. As requested, Davis reported to Nelson. Nelson was direct and asked how Davis was doing with his new assignment and what was the number of men he had mustered, as well as the arms that would be required; Davis replied, "He didn't know."²¹ Davis would say later that he answered this way because he had been given his assignment two days earlier and he had not received all of the reports that he had requested from his subordinate commanders. For that reason, at the time of the inquiry by Nelson, he could not honestly say how the mustering was going.²²

Davis' answer to Nelson's inquiry caused Nelson to become incensed, so he asked Davis for some details on the number of regiments and companies that he had formed. Again, Davis answered that he did not know. Nelson responded by saying, "But you should know" as he arose from his seat. "I am disappointed in you, General Davis. I selected you for this duty because you are an officer in the regular Army, but I find I made a mistake."²³

These comments by General Nelson offended Davis and he demanded that as a general officer that he was entitled to more respect than what he was getting from Nelson. A close friend of Davis' General James B. Fry, who was at the Galt House when this conversation took place, wrote of what happened next:

Davis arose and remarked, in a cool, deliberate manner: "General Nelson, I am a regular soldier, and I demand the treatment due to me as a general officer." Davis then stepped across to the door of the Medical Director's room, both doors being open, as the weather was very warm and said: "Dr Irwin, I wish you to be a witness to this conversation." At the same time Nelson said: "Yes, doctor, I want you to remember this." Davis then said to Nelson: "I demand from you the courtesy due to my rank." Nelson replied: "I will treat you as you deserve. You have disappointed me; you have been unfaithful to the trust which I reposed in you, and I shall relieve you at once, "you are relieved from duty here and you will proceed to Cincinnati and report to General Wright." Davis said: " You have no authority to order me." Nelson turned toward the Adjutant-General and said: "Captain, if General Davis does not leave the city by nine o'clock tonight, give instructions to the Provost-Marshal to see that he shall be put across the Ohio [River]!"²⁴

Davis was dismissed from the office and Nelson returned to his work. Davis left this confrontation in Nelson's office deeply insulted and left his command of the Ninth Division to General Robert Mitchell with whom he had left the command when he had taken his leave-of-absence. Davis departed Louisville and reported to General Wright in

Cincinnati. Wright listened to Davis' story and had him temporarily assigned to a command near Newport and Covington, Kentucky, where he was responsible for outfitting and forwarding troops.

Davis was not the only one who took his relief poorly. His friend and the governor of Indiana Oliver P. Morton also took it poorly. As it was, Governor Morton, who was in the city of Louisville at the time, saw this incident as just another slight against the Indianans. Governor Morton had tried previously to have some measure of control over the soldiers from his state after they had been mustered into federal service. He was denied this request and held this as a grudge.²⁵

On the twenty fifth of September 1862, General Buell returned to Louisville and took over Nelson's position. With this change, Wright felt that he could return Davis to Louisville and have him do more important things for him. With orders from Wright, Davis set out to report for his next assignment to General Buell. As a warrior, Davis was excited about the prospects of now working with Buell. He knew that Buell was planning a massive offensive operation to be carried out against the Confederate forces that were in Kentucky. Davis arrived in Louisville late in the day on Sunday, the twenty eighth of September and the next morning he went to the Galt House, which was also the headquarters of General Buell.

Davis arrived at the Galt House at breakfast time, about 7 o'clock in the morning on the nineteenth of September. The Galt House was a very exclusive hotel. The grand parlor of the hotel was filled with many political and military leaders. When Davis entered the grand parlor, he surveyed the room and to his delight spotted several

friends, including an old family friend, the governor of Indiana Oliver P. Morton. Davis joined his friends for some conversation with the intent of momentarily proceeding on to General Buell's office to report to General Buell. As Davis left Governor Morton and the others he noticed General Nelson enter the parlor and lean up against the main desk of the hotel.²⁶ Nelson asked the clerk at the desk if General Buell had had breakfast yet and "then turned, leaned his back against the counter, faced the assembled people (in the hotel parlor) and glanced over the hall with his clear black eyes. Nelson, with a beard and dark curly hair, was wearing a white vest and had his coat open and thrown back. It was not hard to miss this man who was large in stature."²⁷ Davis, seeing General Nelson and recalling the encounter that they had had previously, approached Nelson, cornered him and demanded an apology for what had happened in their previous confrontation. Governor Morton as well as a well-known lawyer friend by the name of Thomas W. Gibson stood close by.

Nelson refused to apologize and answered Davis' demand with a quick, "No." Davis insisted on an apology, until Nelson said in a loud voice for all to hear, "Go away, you damned puppy, I don't want anything to do with you!"²⁸ In the intensity of the situation of the encounter with General Nelson, Davis had taken a visitor information card from a box on the counter of the hotel's main desk and wadded it into a small ball. With the whole parlor of people now watching the crescendoing encounter, Davis flipped the piece of wadded paper into General Nelson's face using his "forefinger and thumb, as boys shoot marbles." In anger, Nelson slapped Davis across the face with the back of his hand and looking at Governor Morton asked, "Did you come here, sir, to see me

insulted?" Governor Morton replied, "No, sir." With that Nelson left the parlor directly and headed in the direction of his room.²⁹

Davis was humiliated. In his anger and humiliation he grabbed a pistol from a nearby friend. Those watching expected Davis to challenge Nelson to a duel. Davis followed after Nelson catching up to him at the end of a long hall as Nelson was about to ascend the staircase at the end of the hall. Nelson, who was unarmed, turned to face Davis and with no warning Davis pointed the gun at Nelson's chest and shot him from point-blank range, a distance of about three feet.³⁰ General James B. Fry wrote of what he saw take place after Davis was slapped.

Nelson walked away toward his room, which, it will be remembered, was on the office floor, and at the north end of the hall or corridor, which extends along the west side of the building. A doorway connects this corridor with the grand or office hall, and near that doorway starts a staircase, which leads from the hall to the floor above. After the slap, Davis turned to an old Mexican War friend from Indiana, and asked for a pistol. The friend did not have a pistol, but he immediately obtained one from Thomas W. Gibson and gave it to Davis. Gibson was a friend of Davis, and was from Indiana, but at the time of this occurrence he was a practicing lawyer in Louisville. In the meantime Nelson had passed from the office hall to the corridor which led to his room, had walked toward his room, then turned back and was near the foot of the staircase and in front of the doorway leading to the office hall when Davis reached the threshold from the office. They were face to face and about a yard apart, the one with the pistol in hand, the other entirely unarmed. Davis fired and Nelson walked on up stairs. Buell, at the time, was in his room, which was near the head of the stairs on the second floor. It is believed that Nelson was on his way to report to Buell what had occurred, when he was confronted and shot by Davis. Be that as it may, he walked up stairs after he was shot, and fell in the hall between the head of the stairs and Buell's apartment.³¹

Nelson lay on the floor of the hotel in the second floor hallway bleeding profusely. Those who had immediately arrived after the shooting took Nelson from the hallway and moved him into a room right next to the spot where he had fallen. Nelson

said to the proprietor of the hotel Silas F. Miller, "Send for a clergy man, I wish to be baptized. I have been basely murdered."³² The sound of the shot from the pistol also caused those who were in the parlor of the hotel to come rushing to the scene. This group included T. L. Crittenden and J. B. Steedman. Davis turned from the scene and walked back to the parlor and sat down.³³ General Fry continued his observation of the events of the shooting of General Nelson:

The Rev. J. Talbot, an Episcopal minister, was called. All the medical aid available was summoned. Surgeon Robert Murray, Buell's medical director at the time (soon to be Surgeon-General of the Army), says, "I was summoned from the Louisville Hotel to the Galt House when he was shot. I found him on the floor of his room insensible, with stertorous breathing, and evidently dying from hemorrhage. The ball, a small one, entered just over the heart, had passed through that organ or the large vessel connected with it. I am quite sure that he did not utter an intelligible word after I saw him."³⁴

At 8:30 in the morning, just an hour and one-half after Davis had entered the hotel to report for his next assignment, Nelson died.³⁵

When Davis returned to the parlor to sit down a crowd had formed around him. Major General Fry, General Buell's Chief of Staff and an old friend of Davis who had served with him in the Mexican War, placed Davis under arrest by order of General Buell. Fry took Davis, who was greatly agitated but was showing no signs of rage, to Davis' room on one of the upper floors of the Galt House. Davis then proceeded to tell Fry what had happened and the details of the whole affair. Though Fry was only with Davis for a few moments he drew from Davis' confession that the shooting that had just occurred had happened not as a planned event, but as a result of a situation that had gone out of control. Davis admitted he wanted to confront Nelson in public, but there was no

intention to shoot and kill him. Nelson's shooting and death created anger among those in the military who were at the hotel. Brigadier General William Terrill and others even demanded that Davis be hanged immediately for, "this inexcusably despicable act" that Davis had just committed.³⁶

Buell made a quick inquiry into the reason for the shooting. Shocked and angered, he denounced the murder as unjustifiable. He declared that quick action needed to be taken against Davis. Buell, however, was immersed in the making of plans for the offensive operations against the confederate forces that were at his doorstep. With this pressure and a belief that he also had enemies in the War Department who were conspiring to relieve him of command, he felt he was in no position to take action against Davis.³⁷ Buell sent a telegraph to General H. W. Halleck in Washington that stated, "I cannot spare officers from the army now in motion to compose a court. It can perhaps be better done in Washington."³⁸ Davis also had in his favor his influential friend Oliver P. Morton, Governor of Indiana. After the incident, Morton left immediately for Washington to lobby on Davis' behalf. The War Department let the whole incident pass over, ignoring Buell's request that a trial be held in Washington.

Because of the need to prepare for action against the Confederates, court-martial proceedings against Davis were never set in motion. Within a week of the incident, Davis' friend the governor of Indiana Oliver P. Morton and an influential lawyer named James Speed appealed his release from prison to General Wright in Cincinnati. Wright responded favorably to the request saying, "The period during which an officer could be continued in arrest without charges being placed against him had expired . . . I was

satisfied that Davis had acted purely on the defensive in the unfortunate affair, and I presumed Buell held similar views, as he took no action in the matter after placing him under arrest.”³⁹

Major General James Fry, General Buell’s Chief of Staff, would later write of the incident that Buell did not have this view that Wright had thought he had. Fry wrote that Buell considered Davis’ act “a high crime and gross violation of military discipline,” and that Buell simply could not spare “the high officers necessary to constitute a proper court martial, nor could he give the necessary attention to preparing the case for trial in Louisville.”⁴⁰

Two weeks after having killed General Nelson, Davis was placed in command of a division as if the incident with Nelson had never occurred. This time his division was in the new Army of the Cumberland under the command of General Rosecrans.

¹Jefferson C. Davis, *Personal Account of Civil War Experience to Commanding Officer*, (Indianapolis, Indiana: Indiana Historical Society, 4 January 1866), 21.

²John G. Leydon, “The Other Jefferson Davis.” *Civil War, The Magazine of The Civil War Society*, no. 58 (August 1996): 22.

³A. C. McClurg, *Memorial Address for the “Society of the Army of the Cumberland”* Jefferson C. Davis Collection, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana, [1880], 8.

⁴James B. Fry, *Killed By a Brother Soldier: A Chapter in the History of the War* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Son’s, 1885), 3.

⁵Arthur A. Griese, “The Louisville Tragedy – 1862” *The Filson Club History Quarterly*, vol. 26 (Louisville, Kentucky: Press of Gibbs-Inman Company, 1952), 135.

⁶Leydon, 22.

⁷Joseph P. Fried, "How One Union General Murdered Another," *Civil War Times Illustrated* 1, no. 3 (June 1962), 15.

⁸*Ibid.*, 14.

⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁰Griese, 135.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 136.

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³Fry, 3-4.

¹⁴Davis, 21.

¹⁵Fry, 4.

¹⁶John Fitch, *Annals of the Army of the Cumberland* (Philadelphia, Lippincott, 1864), 168.

¹⁷Fry, 5.

¹⁸Fried, 15.

¹⁹Robert Tones, *War with the South* vol. 2 (New York: J. S. Virtue, 1862), 481; and *O.R.*, vol. 16, part 2, 467.

²⁰Major General W. B. Hazen, *A Narrative of Military Service* (Boston, 1885), 56-57.

²¹Fry, 4.

²²Fried, 15.

²³Fry, 4.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 4-5.

²⁵Griese, 139.

²⁶Leydon, 22.

²⁷Fry, 5.

²⁸Fried, 16.

²⁹Fry, 5.

³⁰Leydon, 22.

³¹Fry, 5-6.

³²Leydon, 22.

³³Fried, 16.

³⁴Fry, 6.

³⁵Fried, 16.

³⁶Fry, 7.

³⁷Leydon, 23.

³⁸Fried, 16.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

CHAPTER 5

MURFREESBORO

Davis was elated to be back with soldiers. The events of the past couple months, to include the shooting of General Nelson, had caused him tremendous stress. The Ninth Division, which he now commanded, was the old division that he had commanded prior to being relieved by Major General Nelson some months before. The Ninth Division fell under the Army of the Cumberland, commanded by General Rosecrans. Within Rosecrans' army, Davis' division was assigned to General Alexander McCook's XXth Corps and was designated the First Division. Davis was the commander of the First Division of the XXth Corps of the Army of the Cumberland. Within Davis' division there were three brigades, Colonel P. Sidney Post commanded the First Brigade, Colonel William P. Carlin commanded the Second Brigade, and Colonel William E. Woodruff commanded the Third Brigade.

While the Union army reorganized there was continued movement on the part of the Confederate forces. Confederate General Bragg was located at Murfreesboro, Tennessee, and was continually sending out raiding parties to disrupt and harass the Union forces while they camped in the vicinity of Nashville. As time passed these raids began to irritate Rosecrans. After collecting the supplies that he needed and completing his planned attack against the confederates he began to organize his forces. He then, on the twenty sixth of December 1862, broke camp and moved his forces towards the Confederate forces camped in Murfreesboro.

When dawn broke on the morning of the twenty sixth of December, the soldiers under Davis' command awoke to falling rain and thick fog. The rain was pouring down so hard that visibility was sometimes no further than a hundred and fifty yards. At 6:00 A.M., in compliance with the orders he had just received from McCook, Davis departed camp. The division moved from St. James Chapel, on Mill Creek towards Nolensville and then along the Edmonson Pike to Prim's Blacksmith Shop where they transitioned to movement over "rugged country roads."¹ With the addition of rain, the roads were thick with mud and were virtually impassable.

Davis, whose division was designated the right division of the right wing, advanced his men toward their initial destination of Nolensville despite the miserable conditions. His division led the Union forces.² A few miles from camp Davis' cavalry escort encountered some Confederate pickets and Davis ordered them to go at the Confederate pickets, and attack them on their flanks as often as they could.³ Davis' cavalry was effective in carrying out his orders, and the rest of Davis' forces were able to move to within one mile of Nolensville. As they moved closer to Nolensville, Davis started to receive reports from local citizens and from his own cavalry that the Confederates occupied the town of Nolensville with a force consisting of cavalry and artillery.⁴ With this knowledge, Davis had his First brigade under the command of Colonel Sidney Post deploy on Nolensville, and he had his artillery overwatch Post's advance. Davis' forces began to come under enemy fire from the Confederate artillery, and it appeared that the confederate cavalry was trying to move into a position to support the Confederate cavalry. Davis had his artillery fire on the Confederate cavalry and the

cavalry withdrew. He also had the artillery fire on the Confederate artillery that was firing on Post, and they silenced the Confederate artillery with their effective fires.⁵

While Post was advancing on Nolensville with his brigade, Davis had the Second Brigade under William Carlin form a line of battle to Post's right. Carlin's men engaged dismounted Confederate cavalry in a "sharp" skirmish.⁶ Davis' Third Brigade under the command of Colonel William Woodruff was deployed to Carlin's right to provide flank protection for the division. The advance of the division was successful, and they were able to push back the Confederates that were in front of them. Davis had his forces halt near Nolensville.

It was late in the afternoon of the twenty sixth of December and Davis' forces were tired, wet, and muddy from the day's march and skirmishes with the Confederates. There was no time for rest in Davis' mind. He received information that the Confederates were about two miles in front of his position, a mile or so on the other side of Nolensville. Knowing that the Confederates would be a greater hindrance to his advance if he waited to attack them the next day, he had his division advance to where he believed the Confederate position to be.⁷ Davis decided to attack the Confederates so he sent a message to both Major General Philip H. Sheridan and Major General James S. Negley stating that he was heavily outnumbered and needed support. Both Sheridan and Negley came forward to support the attack.⁸ With his support in place, Davis moved his tired veteran forces forward to make the attack. Davis' division found the enemy occupying a position called Knob Gap, which was a range of very rocky hills through which the Nolensville and Triune Turnpike passed. The enemy was in an advantageous position

and had their artillery in a position that guarded their forces well. As Davis' forces approached, with Carlin's brigade in the lead, the Confederate artillery opened fire on them. Davis brought two of his batteries forward and opened fire on the Confederates. Simultaneously, he had Carlin's brigade charge the Confederate battery that was firing on his division. Carlin's brigade, after a tough but short battle was successful in its attack and silenced the Confederate guns, capturing two of them in the process.⁹

While Carlin was conducting his attack, Davis had Post's brigade, which met little resistance, attack the hills to the left of the turnpike and he had Woodruff's brigade successfully attack and drive away Confederate skirmishers who were to the right of the division. It was just about dark now, and in accordance with orders he received, Davis had his soldiers set up camp for the night. Sheridan's troops joined in the encampment with Davis' division.¹⁰ The action of Davis' division at Knob Gap caused General William Hardee to abandon his camp and retreat during the night in the direction of Murfreesboro.¹¹

The morning of the twenty seventh of December brought no change in the weather from the previous day. Davis marshaled his force and had them break camp and make a small movement to relocate their camp at the intersection of the Balle Jack Road and Nolensville Turnpike, about one mile from Triune. The purpose of this movement was that it was believed that General Hardee's headquarters was in the town of Triune. Davis advanced his troops slowly through a very dense fog expecting a fight but when his forces reached the intersection they found no sign of the Confederates forces in the vicinity of Triune. Disappointed, Davis had his forces set up camp to wait out the storm

that had made their movement of the last two days miserable. They remained in camp at this location till the twenty ninth of December.¹²

On the twenty ninth of December, after the miserable weather had passed, Davis' forces broke camp and began their movement towards Murfreesboro. Again Davis' division led the Union forces in their movement along the Balle Jack Road that led to Murfreesboro.¹³ The movement to Murfreesboro was not without incident. All along the route skirmishers from the Confederate forces harassed the union forces. The Union forces continued to move forward as far as Stewart's Creek. At Stewart's Creek Davis received reports from his cavalry that the Confederates had a considerable force that was just a few miles beyond Stewart's Creek. At the same time the commanding general arrived at Davis' position and ordered a halt to allow the forces in the rear of the formation to be brought forward. Once the rear units had caught up with the army's leading elements, the union forces proceeded across Stewart's Creek, marching unimpeded till they reached the Wilkinson Pike (cross-roads), approximately six miles from Murfreesboro.¹⁴ Next, they moved along the Wilkinson Pike to within three and a half miles of Murfreesboro and established camp for the night on the Overall's Creek where they held the bridge that crossed the creek.¹⁵

On the thirtieth of December the Union forces awoke and Davis' brigade moved to position themselves on the right of General Sheridan's division, approximately three hundred yards south of and parallel to the Wilkinson Pike. They remained in this position till about 2:00 P.M. While they waited for the command to begin movement

towards Murfreesboro, the Union forces sent out several companies of skirmishers to locate the enemy. They found the enemy and skirmished with them for several hours.¹⁶

At 2:00 P.M., with Sheridan's division next to his, Davis and Sheridan were given the command to move forward along Wilkinson Pike. As they moved forward they encountered skirmishers from the Confederate forces. Receiving some resistance from the Confederates, the Union commanders slowly increased the numbers of soldiers in their skirmish lines. Colonel Carlin's brigade led Davis' division. As Carlin's regiments advanced across the farm fields they came in contact with the strengthening Confederate forces. Carlin was able to force the confederates back and as he did this he requested support from the other two brigade commanders, Colonels Woodruff and Post. Carlin continued to move closer to the Confederates and shortly they opened fire on his brigade with their artillery. In response, Davis had two of his artillery batteries brought forward and he ordered Carlin and Woodruff to charge towards the Confederates. While Carlin and Woodruff attacked, Post's brigade moved forward on the right, meeting great resistance. The Confederates were able to force Post's skirmishers back to their main line. Post held his position as night fell upon the battlefield. Carlin's and Woodruff's forces, after a successful attack, withdrew and took up positions in nearby woods that provided them with cover and protection.¹⁷ This is where Davis' division remained for the night. The lines for the battle at Murfreesboro were formed. Davis and his division were "formed on the extreme right" side of the Union line and "in close range of the enemy's main lines."¹⁸ The Confederate army had formed its lines in front of Murfreesboro across the Stones River from the Union forces.

That evening the division of Brigadier General R. W. Johnson arrived and two of his brigades were positioned on the right side of Davis' division.¹⁹ The Third Brigade of Johnson's division, which had been left at Triune as a reserve, also moved forward and was positioned near McCooks headquarters.²⁰ Davis was in the center of the Union forces with Sheridan to his left and Johnson to his right. All three divisions were under the command of General McCook and were holding the right flank of the Union position under General Rosecrans.

That evening, at 9:00 P.M., General Rosecrans called a meeting of his corps commanders.²¹ These commanders included McCook, Crittenden, and Thomas. The reason for the meeting was the concern that Rosecrans had about information he had on confederate General Hardee's forces moving to the far right of the Union position. Rosecrans knew that his forces were strong enough to take on a frontal attack from the Confederate forces but he also knew that a flank attack by the Confederates could mean a very serious situation for his army. Only two brigades from Johnson's division defended the far right flank towards which Hardee's troops were moving. This was of major concern to Rosecrans.

Rosecrans expressed these concerns to his corps commanders, McCook, Crittenden and Thomas. When McCook arrived, Rosecrans told him of the plan and concern that he had with the portion of the line that McCook was holding. Rosecrans plan was to have Crittenden who was on the Union left flank, attack the Confederate right flank and move it in so that Crittenden would now be in the rear area of the Confederate forces and be able to keep the Confederate forces from retreating.²² Both McCook and

Thomas were to hold the positions that they were in and move on Hardee's forces when the attack by Crittenden's forces was successful. It was obvious that Rosecrans was concerned about the possible movement of Hardee's forces to the right of the Union position. In his concern, Rosecrans told McCook that he was not really comfortable with the position of McCook's force. He then suggested how McCook could better array his forces.²³

McCook left the meeting and returned to his position. McCook was anxious about the positioning of his line. He felt that the right of his line rested directly in the center of the Confederate line. Rosecrans understood McCook's concerns and believed them to be accurate. Hardee's forces had moved to a position where they could outflank the Union forces on the right side, just as McCook had thought they might.²⁴ With Rosecrans support, McCook decided to make one minor adjustment and he had his reserve, two of Johnson's brigades, move to the right of Davis' forces to make it appear that the Union forces extended further to the right than they really did.²⁵ That night, both sides waited for the sun to rise and they slept as best as they could.

As the morning broke the next day, the Union forces under Crittenden made their attack against the right side of the Confederate forces. At the same time the Confederates, having a similar plan to that of Rosecrans had Hardee's forces move against the right side of the Union forces. It was twenty-two minutes after 6 AM and both sides were executing similar attacks.²⁶ The attack by the Confederates against the Union right flank and Johnson's forces came early and was led by skirmishers.²⁷ Johnson's front line pickets were easily pushed back and within moments the Confederate

troops of Hardee's Division were in his position. Outnumbered, attacked from the front by infantry, and on the flank by cavalry, Johnson's forces turned and ran from their position leaving their artillery behind.²⁸

Through the dawn of the morning the Confederate forces moved towards Davis' position. Davis' forces held their ground under the attack of the Confederates and repulsed the attack several times. Davis' troops were "fully prepared for it[the attack]" and were "equal to veteran troops."²⁹ When Johnson's division had failed to stand against the Confederate attack the situation changed considerably for Davis. His unit had held strong against the attack by the Confederates at his front, but now that Johnson's division had run, he was vulnerable not only on his right flank but also vulnerable to his rear. With the new situation as it was, Davis decided to have Colonel Post, whose brigade was on the right of Davis' division, move his brigade to the right rear of the division's position to protect the division from a flank or rear attack by the Confederates. Davis had Colonel Carlin, whose brigade was in the center of the division's position, and Colonel Woodruff's brigade, which occupied the left of the division's position, remain in place to fight the frontal attack by the confederates.³⁰

Colonel Post's brigade performed admirably. It fended off two major attacks by the Confederates, but against the third organized attack by the Confederates, it was unable to hold its position. With ammunition running low it had to withdraw. Carlin, who still occupied the center of Davis' position, now had his right flank open. Carlin's brigade was battered terribly and under tremendous pressure on its right flank from the "overwhelming numbers and heavy losses" caused by the Confederate attack.³¹ Carlin

could not hold his position any longer so he had his brigade withdraw. Woodruff's forces also held their position, but with the withdrawal of Carlin's brigade from his right and as well as having no friendly forces protecting his left flank, he too had to withdraw.³²

Davis initially tried to reform his lines on his right using one of his artillery batteries and part of Post's brigade and one of Johnson's brigades. They were able to check the Confederate attack for a short period, but had to fall back. Davis then attempted to position another artillery battery to lay fires on the enemy in the hopes of reforming his lines along the Wilkinson Pike, but because of the size of the Confederate force the infantry was unable to support the artillery and they all had to withdraw further.³³ Davis next attempted to have his forces fall in on Sheridan's division, which was to his division's left, but he was unable to rally his forces to make this happen either. McCook attempted to reform his corps on high ground to the rear of the Wilkinson Pike. This effort also failed.³⁴ Davis' division kept falling back to within a few hundred yards of the Nashville Pike and the Murfreesboro Pike. Here again he attempted to reform his lines, but his forces were so decimated from the day's battle that they were unable to fend the attacking Confederates. At this point a reserve force moved in to fight the Confederates and Davis' division withdrew.³⁵

The Union troops including Davis' division finally were able to form a line about two miles behind their original position and were now arrayed along the Nashville Pike and the Murfreesboro Pike.³⁶ Davis' men took up positions on the right side of the Union line as they were ordered. Davis' division was reinforced by Crittenden's corps, which had been called back from their attack on the right flank of the Confederates when

McCook's corps had fallen to the attack by Hardee's forces.³⁷ This was the end of the battle for Davis until the later part of the afternoon when his unit received some harassment from Confederate forces and he had to deploy some skirmishers. Nothing in this encounter was of consequence.

As the sun set on the day both armies ceased their attacks and accounted for the location and status of their respective forces. Though the day's battle had not seemed like a successful one for Davis and the Union army, Davis and his division could take comfort in the fact that they had met the confederate forces head-on and were able to delay them. The delay gave Sheridan's force the opportunity to get into position to give the rest of the union forces a chance to drop back and form the line that they were holding.³⁸

It was the thirty first of December and it was raining steadily. Rosecrans had his corps commanders report to him. They discussed the events of the day and the position of the forces for what was anticipated to be battle in the morning. The next day, to Rosecrans' surprise, there was no attack by the Confederates, though some skirmishing occurred. It was cold and it was raining still and General Bragg's failure to attack the Union forces on the first of January 1863 gave Rosecrans time to plan for the next day's battle.

Over the first and second of January, Davis' forces remained in position, and fought several small skirmishes with the enemy. The ceaseless rain had made the battlefield a quagmire that was not conducive to large movements by either side. This did not, however, keep the Confederates from assembling their forces. At about 4:00

P.M. on the second of January their lines began to fire artillery and their infantry forces moved against the left side of the Union lines.³⁹

With the movement of the Confederate forces on his left, Rosecrans had General Thomas send a division under the command of Major General James S. Negley across the Stones River. The division was to support Colonel John Beatty's (formerly Van Cleve's) division, which Rosecrans had had General Crittenden move to that location the day before.⁴⁰ Beatty's division met tremendous pressure and was forced back. Rosecrans asked for more support and Davis responded. Davis placed one of his batteries on the bank of the river to cover the ford over which his division would pass.⁴¹ Colonel Woodruff's brigade was the first to cross the river and it joined in the fight with Beatty and Negley and helped recapture the ground that Beatty had previously occupied.⁴² Before Colonel Carlin's brigade could cross the river, Carlin was personally summoned to report to Rosecrans. Colonel Carlin was given the mission to divide his brigade into two parts to protect a possible retreat by the Union forces. Carlin then returned to his brigade and crossed the river with them and joined the fight with Beatty, Negley, and Woodruff.⁴³

Once Carlin had crossed the river, Rosecrans had his artillery commander, John Mendenhall, open fire with his fifty-eight guns on the Confederate attack. The fires from Mendenhall's guns were lethal and obliterated the Confederate forces. The Confederates broke ranks and ran into the forest to their rear for cover. The sun set and both armies remained in their positions. Rosecrans told Davis, who was with his forces supporting Beatty and Negley, to take charge of all units that were on that side of the river with him.

Davis had his troops build rifle pits and breastworks and make preparations for the attack that they expected to take place in the morning.⁴⁴ The next morning, it was raining incessantly, and an attack by the Confederates did not occur. Some skirmishing did take place but not enough to affect either position or warrant the commitment of either force.

The night of the third and into the morning of the fourth of January it continued to rain and Davis, between the hours of 1:00 A.M. and 4:00 A.M., ordered his command to recross to rejoin those forces under command of Rosecrans.⁴⁵ Rosecrans now had his army consolidated. When the sun rose on the forth there were no Confederate forces to be seen.

During the night, General Bragg had retreated back into southern Tennessee. The battle of Murfreesboro was over and the Union forces were victorious. They had stopped the Confederate forces from moving towards Nashville. This had been and would be the last major offensive of the confederate army into the west. By the fifth of January the Union forces were in complete control of Murfreesboro and they set up a semi permanent camp for the remainder of the month. The coming days were used by burial details to account for soldiers and to bury those who had been killed in the previous days of battle.⁴⁶

General Rosecrans wrote in his report that Davis had performed with "gallant conduct during the battle, and with prompt support and conscientious attention to duty during his service with the right wing." With this remark he added that Davis' name should be added to the list from which officers would be selected to "be major generals in our service."⁴⁷

February came quickly and with it General Bragg decided to mount some attacks against the Union forces at Fort Donelson, which was located on the Cumberland River. Expecting to catch the Union forces by surprise he had his cavalry, under the command of Major General Joseph Wheeler, move to make an attack. Rosecrans, however, got wind of Bragg's plan and had Davis move to intercept Wheeler's forces. The force Davis commanded was his First Division and a cavalry division. With this force, Davis headed towards Eagleville and Franklin where he engaged a large enemy force, capturing one entire regiment of cavalry.⁴⁸ Wheeler was in Franklin and Davis, knowing this, consolidated his units near Franklin and prepared to attack Wheeler. Wheeler withdrew from the town of Franklin and moved to the north towards his original objective of Fort Donelson. Davis had his infantry division set up camp while he took the cavalry division and followed Wheeler, who was forty-eight hours ahead of him, through "the rain or snow falling incessantly [that] made our pursuit a very arduous one."⁴⁹ Wheeler attacked Fort Donelson but was unsuccessful in his attack on the fort and withdrew his forces towards the south. This was what Davis was hoping for. Though Davis was not in a position to go directly after Wheeler, he knew the route that Wheeler was planning to take so Davis had his forces turn towards Franklin and march towards the area around Bon Aqua in hope of intercepting Wheeler's Confederate force.⁵⁰ To Davis' chagrin, Wheeler got word of Davis' plan and changed the direction of the movement of his force towards Centerville. Davis followed and "came upon some of his [Wheeler] detached forces in their retreat from Fort Donelson and after some skirmishing drove him across the Duck River below Williamsport."⁵¹ Wheeler was able to escape across the Duck River with

most of his forces and found safety behind Confederate lines. Davis, from the skirmish with Wheeler's detachment, took about 400 prisoners, but did not have a major engagement with Wheeler's force.⁵² Wheeler's escape frustrated Davis because he felt that if the weather and the condition of the roads had been better that he and his forces could have caught Wheeler and defeated him.

Davis' mission to go after Wheeler took about two weeks and even though the mission did not meet with the success anticipated by Davis and Rosecrans, it was still considered a success because Wheeler had failed to capture Fort Donelson. It was also a success from the standpoint that despite the terrible weather conditions, Davis had captured some of the Confederate soldiers of Wheeler's cavalry as well as the cavalry regiment near Franklin. Davis returned, with the troops he led in pursuit of Wheeler, to Murfreesboro to camp.⁵³ Again, Rosecrans recommended Davis, at the end of this mission, for promotion to Major General.⁵⁴

Davis remained in the vicinity of Murfreesboro with his division till April. During the month of April, Davis found himself participating in the reconnaissance to deter the Confederates from interfering with the Union supply lines. His first act was to move his forces towards Eagleville.⁵⁵ In these reconnaissance, Davis' forces were involved in little more than skirmishes. While conducting these reconnaissance he found himself passing through the town of Triune again as well as several other small towns in Tennessee.⁵⁶ This mission continued for Davis and his division for ten days, whereupon Davis' division returned to Murfreesboro, except for the occasional detail to go foraging, things remained uneventful.⁵⁷

The first couple of weeks in June 1863, Davis continued to send out details for foraging and even found some of his forces in minor skirmishes with the Confederates. On the sixth of June he had a small skirmish on the Shelbyville Turnpike.⁵⁸ On the twenty fourth of June Rosecrans issued orders for his army to break camp at Murfreesboro and move upon the enemy's position to the south at Tullahoma.⁵⁹ Tullahoma was the location of the Confederate headquarters. As Davis departed it was raining and Johnson's division accompanied his units as they set out for Tullahoma. Johnson's division was in the lead of the Union formation with Davis' division in trail. When they reached the town of Millersburg, the Union force turned to its left and moved towards the Liberty Gap. As they approached the Liberty Gap, Johnson's forces came under enemy fire that became heavier as they advanced. At the sound of battle, Davis moved two of his brigades forward to support Johnson's division. Soon it was night and the Union forces made camp. The next morning the Union forces moved forward and were soon after engaged with the confederates. This time the Confederates began to fire artillery. Johnson and Davis pushed their divisions forward and soon they had driven the Confederates back through the Liberty Gap.⁶⁰ Davis' losses for the encounter at Liberty Gap were three killed and twenty eight wounded.⁶¹

On the twenty sixth of June 1863, Davis received word that the Union forces were going to move directly toward Tullahoma to attack Bragg's headquarters. To support the attack, Davis and Johnson were given a supporting mission. Instead of participating in the attack on Tullahoma they were to continue to push the Confederate forces back through the Liberty Gap but were not to become decisively engaged with the

Confederates. Davis and Johnson were to try to mislead the confederates into believing that the Union forces intended to move on to Wartrace instead of Tullahoma.⁶²

Carlin, still one of Davis' brigade commanders, and now a brigadier general, was given the task to lead the push against the Confederates in the Liberty Gap. Carlin's brigade moved forward and in short order; skirmishers from the Confederate forces met them. Carlin's brigade soon fell under heavy attack. Davis ordered Carlin to stop his movement forward and to hold his position. Davis reported the situation to his corps commander, General McCook. The next day he was ordered by McCook to leave Liberty Gap and join the main force as it marched towards Manchester. At Manchester the Union forces camped and waited for word on the whereabouts of General Bragg. It was the twenty eighth of June. On the first of July word came that the Confederate troops were moving out of Tullahoma to the southeast. The Union forces broke camp and moved after the Confederates. Shortly they were passing through Tullahoma and moved on towards the east following after the Confederate force towards the direction of Winchester. By the third of July, Davis reached Winchester but was too late to catch the Confederate force. The Confederates crossed the Elk River near Winchester and were moving in full retreat under Bragg towards Chattanooga. In Winchester, Davis had his forces make a temporary halt. The way was clear now for Union forces to move to Chattanooga.

For six weeks Davis stayed at Winchester, which his division "occupied" and he "commanded the town."⁶³ The six-week delay in Winchester was a result of logistical

problems that Rosecrans was experiencing. Once the logistics were set, Rosecrans decided on a plan to pursue Bragg into Chattanooga and to drive him from the city.

Rosecrans' first move was to send a force north of the city of Chattanooga as a diversion to mask the movement of the bulk of his forces through the Cumberland Mountains to the Tennessee River just south of Chattanooga. Davis' division was part of the main effort to the south of Chattanooga. Rosecrans had part of his force cross over the Cumberland Mountains and camp on the Tennessee River.⁶⁴ They camped for ten days. On the tenth day, Davis and his division as part of McCook's force crossed the Tennessee River. Davis' division was the first to cross the river. When the troops reached the far shore they drove the Confederates that were defending the south side of the river from their positions. A pontoon bridge was constructed and Davis' force defended it while the remaining parts of McCook's corps crossed the river.⁶⁵

When the whole Union force had crossed the river, Rosecrans decided not to go straight to Chattanooga, but to move toward Rome with the intention of attacking General Bragg's supply lines. Davis was given the lead of McCook's corps and led the force over Lookout Mountain towards Rome. Bragg observed the Union forces coming from Lookout Mountain. This caused concern for Bragg, as he feared that the Union forces would get to his supply lines. With this in mind he chose to pull his forces out of Chattanooga and retreated into north Georgia. The Union army occupied Chattanooga without a fight.

General Bragg's withdrawal into north Georgia was the beginning of a period of cat and mouse between the Union and Confederate forces. Rosecrans had earlier split his

forces into three corps to search for the confederate forces. McCook's corps moved towards Alpine ridge, Georgia. Along the way Davis' forces had the responsibility of repairing roads for the remainder of the corps to pass over and also had the responsibility to fight skirmishers from any Confederate force that they happened upon.⁶⁶

On the eleventh of September, Rosecrans discovered that Bragg was still in north Georgia and was positioned to fight. Rosecrans found himself in a predicament. His corps were in three different locations. McCook's corps was about forty miles south of Chattanooga near Alpine, Georgia.⁶⁷ Thomas' corps was about twenty miles south of Chattanooga and Crittenden's Corps was just southeast of Chattanooga and moving to join forces with Thomas. Rosecrans fear was that since such great distances separated his corps all Bragg had to do was encounter them one at a time and he would be able to wipe them out. Rosecrans immediately sent the orders to the three corps commanders to join "in McLemore's Cove on the east slope of Lookout Mountain."⁶⁸ It was imperative that this take place because the Confederates were being reinforced.

¹William D. Bickham, *Rosecrans Army Campaign with the 14th Army Corp, of the Army of the Cumberland: Battle of Stone River* (Cincinnati: Moore, Wiltach, Key & Co., 1863), 416.

²Jefferson C. Davis, *Personal Account of Civil War Experience to Commanding Officer*, (Indianapolis, Indiana: Indiana Historical Society, 4 January 1866), 22.

³Bickham, 416.

⁴*Ibid.*, 417.

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷Ibid.

⁸Bickham, 422.

⁹Bickham, 417.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Davis, 23.

¹²Bickham, 417.

¹³Davis, 23.

¹⁴Bickham, 373.

¹⁵Bickham, 418.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Davis, 23.

¹⁹Bickham, 418.

²⁰Bickham, 414.

²¹Bickham, 375.

²²Bickham, 388.

²³Bickham, 375.

²⁴Bickham, 387.

²⁵Bickham, 414.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Bickham, 419.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Davis, 24.

³⁰Bickham, 419.

³¹Davis, 24.

³²Bickham, 419.

³³Bickham, 388.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Davis, 24.

³⁷Bickham, 377.

³⁸Ephraim A. Otis, *The Murfreesboro Campaign, Campaigns in Kentucky and Tennessee, 1862-1864, Papers of the Military Historical Society of Massachusetts*, vol. 7, (Boston, Massachusetts: The Military Historical Society of Massachusetts, 1908), 309.

³⁹Bickham, 420.

⁴⁰Bickham, 398.

⁴¹Davis, 24.

⁴²Bickham, 420.

⁴³*O.R.*, vol. 20, part 1, 279.

⁴⁴Bickham, 420.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Otis, 319.

⁴⁷Bickham, 383.

⁴⁸Davis, 25.

⁴⁹Ibid., 26.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴*O.R.*, vol. 23, part 2, 83.

⁵⁵Davis, 26.

⁵⁶*O.R.*, vol. 33, part 1, 144.

⁵⁷Davis 27.

⁵⁸*O.R.*, vol. 33, part 1, 144.

⁵⁹Davis, 27.

⁶⁰*O.R.*, vol. 22, part 1, 470.

⁶¹*O.R.*, vol. 22, part 1, 422.

⁶²*O.R.*, vol. 22, part 1, 470.

⁶³Davis, 27.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Ibid., 28.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid.

CHAPTER 6

CHICKAMAUGA

Since Davis' division had fought the Battle at Murfreesboro there had been reorganization in the command of Davis' Third Brigade. Colonel Hans C. Heg replaced Colonel Woodruff in May 1863. The other two brigades still had the same commanders, Brigadier General William P. Carlin in command of the Second Brigade and Colonel P. Sidney Post in command of First Brigade. The division in this configuration had participated in skirmishes till June and July of 1863 at which time they had participated in battle in support of Rosecrans efforts in the Tullahoma Campaign to pursue Bragg. From these skirmishes and exposure to battle the skills of the leaders and men of Davis' division grew and they had become a cohesive fighting force that would soon meet the Confederates in battle at Chickamauga.

With Rosecrans' orders to consolidate his forces, McCook started to concentrate his corps on the seventeenth of September at McLemore's Cove. Davis' division, which was located on the mountain at Stevens Gap, had received orders in the early morning of the seventeenth to join McCook. By 10:00 A.M. on the seventeenth Davis had moved his division and had reported to McCook.¹ On September eighteenth McCook's corps, except the First Brigade from General Jefferson C. Davis' division that was under the command of Colonel Post, closed with Thomas' Fourteenth Corps. Colonel Post's brigade had been ordered by General Rosecrans to hold Stevens Gap, on Lookout Mountain, at all hazards.²

After Davis reported to McCook, reports started to come in from the signal officers that the enemy was advancing towards Stevens Gap in heavy force. McCook gave orders and arrayed his forces to receive the attack if it were to happen. Davis and his division waited in anticipation of the attack for several hours but nothing materialized. He received new orders and marched his division, closely following the baggage train of Major General John Brannon's division, to Pond Spring where he was suppose to camp for the night. When Davis arrived at Pond Spring with his division, he received new instructions from McCook. McCook posted the remaining two brigades of Davis' division to the west of Dug Gap.³ Davis' division was supported in this position on his right by Sheridan's division, at Bailey's Crossroads.

In the early morning, just after day break, at about 8:00 A.M. on the nineteenth of September, Davis followed orders issued at 3:30 A.M. by McCook, and followed General Johnson's division to where McCook was massing his corps at Crawfish Spring.⁴ As they moved towards Crawfish Spring, Davis' division began to hear the roar of the artillery coming from the direction of General Thomas' lines. Davis' division continued behind Johnson's division towards the sound of the artillery and their intended destination of Crawfish Spring. The sound of the artillery increased as Davis' division moved forward. This gave Davis and the soldiers of his division an assurance that the battle was soon to be opened.

The soldiers in Davis' division, anticipating the beginning of the coming battle, closed ranks and moved forward determinedly, and at a steady and firm step. As they approached Crawfish Spring, McCook gave orders to Davis to continue forward to

Widow Glenn's House and to report to General Rosecrans or General Thomas.

Reporting to Thomas meant that Davis' division would be on the extreme left of the Union army's line.⁵ At 10:15 A.M., McCook was ordered to take command of the right of the Union line and the cavalry on that flank.⁶ This order to take command included him taking command of Negley's division of the Fourteenth Corps that was responsible for watching the fords of Chickamauga near Crawfish Spring.⁷

While the movement of these troops was taking place, Brigadier General Absalom Baird's division under Thomas's command was embroiled in heated battle and it was being driven back by the soldiers from Confederate General's Walker's Corps. As Baird was being driven back, Thomas took Johnson's division, which had just arrived at his location and put them into battle. Thomas also took Reynold's division of his own corps, as well, and sent them to engage the Confederates. The Union line under Thomas was now arrayed with Baird on the left, Johnson to his right, Palmer on Johnson's right, and Reynolds to Palmer's right with one of Reynolds' brigades in reserve. With the Union line formed, they advanced forward, attacking the flank of Walker's Corps with great success, forcing Walker's Division back to its original positions.

Bragg, seeing what was happening, ordered a division under Major General Benjamin Cheatham's command, which had been in reserve, to reinforce Walker's Corps. Once Cheatham's command reached Walker's Corps they joined forces and attacked in mass against the left of Thomas's line. As the confederates moved forward a break in the line developed and Bragg had Stewart's division advance forward to exploit the gap. Stewart's Division first ran into Johnson's division and drove it from its position in

disarray. Next, Palmer's division was forced to pull back. Then Van Cleve, who had been ordered to support Johnson and Palmer, was forced to pull back. Next, Reynolds' division had to fall back as the Confederate forces seemed to be building momentum. At about this time, 11:30 A.M., the division under the command of Jefferson C. Davis, which had departed Crawfish Springs, had arrived in the vicinity of Widow Glenn's House to report to General Rosecrans or General Thomas as he had been ordered.⁸

Davis reported to Rosecrans and Rosecrans had Davis move immediately to the battle and form to the right of Van Cleve thus extending the Union line further toward where General Wood's division would be located when it arrived. Davis' divisions moved forward in the attack. General Wood's unit, as well as General Sheridan's division, which were moving in from Lee and Gordon's Mills, were expected to arrive momentarily to support the attack.

The location of the battle that was forthcoming for Davis was going to take place on the Viniard Farm, which extended along the La Fayette Road to the east and west. The area was surrounded on all side by thick woods, which would prove an advantage to both sides as they used the vegetation to their advantages as they were about to attack and counterattack during the battle. The open fields would be a disadvantage to both sides, as it would leave the two opposing forces open to attack and at the end of the day would be the final resting place for many a soldier on either side.⁹

After arriving at the Widow Glenn's house at about 11:30 A.M., where General Rosecrans had established his headquarters, Davis reported to General Rosecrans that his command was, "ready for action."¹⁰ It was quite apparent to Davis, from the increasing

sounds of the muskets and artillery being fired, that there would be a need for reinforcements to be pushed forward to support the Union forces already engaged in battle. General Rosecrans ordered Davis to place one of his batteries in position on a piece of ground forward of the headquarters that gave a commanding view from which supportive fires could be fired. Davis was to then move forward as quickly as he could to the direction of the heaviest fires that were being heard.¹¹

Davis had received instructions from Rosecrans on what to do in this attack and he fully understood them. His orders were to join the battle and to turn the Confederate left flank. Davis had his Chief of Artillery, Captain William A. Hotchkiss, position the Eighth Wisconsin Battery, under the command of Lieutenant McLean, in an open field to the east of Widow Glenn's house. Davis, in compliance with orders received from Rosecrans, formed his division in a column with the Second Minnesota Battery, Lieutenant Woodbury commanding, following and Davis moved his division forward.¹² They moved forward at a double-quick pace for about a mile and a quarter. In a few minutes the head of his column reached the right side of the Union lines.

At this location Davis found the Third Brigade of Van Cleve's division, commanded by Colonel Sidney Barnes, was in position on the right of the Union lines. Davis took his two brigades of Carlin and Heg and had them form in regiments in echelon so that they could wheel to the left from Barnes right. Heg was positioned to the right of Barnes and Carlin was positioned to the right of Heg. The Confederates, as Heg's brigade was moving into position, immediately fired upon them. Carlin's brigade was immediately deployed on Heg's right. Supporting this maneuver was the artillery

that Davis had placed on the open field to the east of Widow's Glenn. Davis would lead his troops by the right flank through dense woods under heavy fire.¹³

Carlin's regiments were arrayed with the Thirty-Eighth Illinois Volunteers, Lieutenant-Colonel Daniel H. Gilmer commanding, on the left within the woods line; the One Hundred and First Ohio Volunteers, Lieutenant-Colonel John Messer commanding, in the center and in the open field; the Eighty-First Indiana Volunteers, Captain Nevil B. Boone commanding, on the right side and also in the open field. The Twenty-First Illinois of Carlin's brigade, with Colonel John W. S. Alexander commanding, was first ordered by Davis to remain in reserve and was about 100 yards to the right and rear of the Eighty-First Illinois Volunteers on the edge of a forest that spread out to their front. They arrived at this position and later received orders from Davis to report to Colonel Heg, the Third Brigade commander, to support his brigade during the day's fight.¹⁴

When Carlin's brigade first arrived in its position it had filed to the right and had formed on the right of Heg's brigade in a line. As the regiments encountered heavy enemy fire, orders came down from Davis to Carlin to have his men lie down to reduce the chance of casualties. Those soldiers from the Thirty-Eighth Illinois Regiment that were in the wood line fared reasonably well by lying down, but the soldiers of Company K, which were in the open and on the road, were very open and exposed and suffered heavy casualties. They were ordered initially not to fire on the Confederates, but in a short time they were ordered to get up and move forward because they had received heavy casualties while they had been lying down. It was better for them to fight and die than to lay on the ground and die.¹⁵

Carlin's left regiments were soon involved in fierce battle. To Carlin's right was a large open field. This field presented itself as an excellent place to position some artillery and Davis had Captain Hotchkiss move as quickly as he could and have the Second Battery of the Minnesota Light Artillery, commanded by Lieutenant Albert Woodbury, set up there just a little to the rear of the line of Infantry and to the enemy's left. As the artillery was moved into position it received fire from enemy skirmishers. To protect the artillery, Carlin received an order from Davis to have a regiment support the artillery of the division.¹⁶ Carlin had the Eighty-First Illinois of his Brigade, commanded by Captain Nevil B. Boone, placed to the right of the Second Minnesota Battery as support.¹⁷ After some of the early action of the day, Carlin would later replace Boone, at about 2:30 P.M., with Major James E. Calloway from the Twenty-First Illinois Volunteers because Carlin found Boone to be incompetent.¹⁸

Carlin was now fighting with only two regiments under his command. Davis pulled his division infantry back so that the artillery could have freedom to range the enemy without Davis' soldiers being in the way. As Davis' division drew back towards its own artillery the Confederate force moved forward and showed itself in "heavy force" to the front of Davis division and made it apparent to Davis that they were trying to turn his flank with the intention of gaining possession of the La Fayette Road. If the Confederates attained this goal, Davis thought, it could cause problems for the Union army as Wood's division had still to pass on the road to get to the battlefield.¹⁹

Heg's brigade was positioned on the left side of Davis' Division with the Fifteenth Wisconsin, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Ole C. Johnson, on the

left; the Eighth Kansas, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel James L. Abernathy, in the center; and the Thirty-Fifth Illinois, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel William P. Chandler, on the right. The Twenty-Fifth Illinois, under the command of Major Samuel D. Wall, was in reserve directly to the rear of Heg's front line.²⁰

The line that Davis had formed with his division ran through a thick oak forest, a few hundred yards in front of and parallel to the La Fayette Road that led to Lee and Gordon's Mill. His right side was refused by the batteries he had in position. It was about 12:30 P.M. when Davis had moved his division up on the Confederate position. The Confederates had carefully hidden their positions in the forest behind fallen logs and large rocks and fired on Davis' line. The Confederate initial fire was effective and destructive, but the men of Davis' division replied to the fire from the Confederates immediately and they pushed forward rapidly. The sounds of the muskets blasting was almost deafening to the soldiers involved.²¹

Davis' division was initially successful and drove back the Confederates. Soon, however, his two brigades began to give up ground to the tremendous pressure of the counterattack by the Confederates. The two forces continued to engage in what was heavily contested battle till almost 1:15 P.M., neither side wanting to give way to the other though Davis's line was slowly being pushed back. The most pressure was taking place on the flanks of his formation and soon his right and left flanks were resting on the La Fayette Road. At 1:15 P.M., Heg sent word to Davis that the left side of his line was being, "very hard pressed" and that he needed reinforcements. He also told Davis that he

had already ordered his own reserve regiment, the Twenty-fifth Illinois, forward and that that had not helped him hold his position.²²

Davis responded to Heg's request by ordering Carlin to send his reserve regiment, the Twenty-First Illinois, under the command of Colonel Alexander, to Heg to support and help Heg hold his line.²³ The Twenty-Fifth Illinois, when called, had moved forward without hesitation and was immediately immersed in the thick of the fighting. As they moved forward there was a large number of wounded who were making their way to the rear, unable to fight any more. Colonel Heg urged his soldiers to fight on despite the huge number of casualties they were taking and what seemed to be the constant reinforcements being added to the fight by the Confederates.²⁴ Heg, with Colonel Alexander's regiment supporting, was able to hold his position.

Davis attempted to commence the wheel movement to the left to try and flank the Confederates. It was 2:00 P.M. and Davis' division was now advancing slowly off of La Fayette road fulfilling the orders that Rosecrans had given them earlier to find and attack the Confederate left.²⁵ With Carlin's brigade to the right and Heg's brigade to the left of the division formation, Davis advanced forward again. After a short period of time and a short movement they encountered the Confederates again and became heavily engaged.²⁶

At this point, Davis found himself with some support from Colonel Wilder's brigade, which was armed with repeating carbines. They had been detached from their division to serve as mounted infantry and were fighting on foot.²⁷ Wilder could see a "rebel column to the right in the act of flanking a battery [Second Minnesota Battery] of

General Davis' command," and, "sent two regiments under the command of Colonels Monroe and Miller to repel them."²⁸

Colonel Wilder informed Colonel Carlin of the two regiments that he had sent to the right of Carlin's line and told Carlin of their position in the wooded forest to the right. Moments later Carlin discovered that there were Union troops to his right that were starting to swing around to the left perpendicular to his line. Not sure of who they were, Carlin rode his horse, under heavy enemy fire, to the Union force that was swinging in front of his brigade and found out that they were Colonel Barnes' brigade of Van Cleve's division. Barnes brigade kept their movement going until they were in front of half of Carlin's One Hundred and First Ohio. Carlin then had Messer, commander of the One Hundred and First Ohio, advance his regiment and half-wheel to the left alongside Colonel Barnes' brigade and fire into the woods at the Confederate soldiers that were located there.

In the heat and confusion of the battle, the Second Minnesota battery of artillery under the control of Lieutenant Woodbury fired their weapons in the direction of the confederates. Additionally, other batteries along the Union line that were to the rear and in close proximity to Carlin's Brigade fired their guns at the confederates. Carlin began to get reports from the One Hundred and First Ohio that they were being fired on by the friendly artillery that was positioned directly to the rear of the unit, which was Woodbury's guns, and that men were being killed and wounded. Carlin raced to Woodbury and ordered him to stop firing at friendly forces. Woodbury responded to Carlin by saying that he was not sure of the location of the friendly forces and that he had

received orders from Hotchkiss and Davis to use shorter fuses so that he could burst his shells closer to the friendly forces so that protection could be provided.²⁹

The Confederates returned fire and this fire caused the brigade of Barnes to break and fall back and also caused the right side of the One Hundred and First Ohio to fall back as well. The Thirty-Eighth Illinois held its position but also had to fall back as the Third Brigade under Heg, which was to their left, started to fall back. The remainder of the One Hundred and First Ohio also fell back in good order under the brave leadership of Messer. Eventually, both the One Hundred and First Ohio and the Thirty-Eighth Illinois had fallen back across the open field to the west side of the Lafayette Road where they found Wood's division in the tree line, who had just come forward to support Davis' division's effort.³⁰

Davis' division along with Wilder's cavalry was able to hold the line against the Confederate forces they were fighting but were slowly giving way. The enemy they were facing included Trigg's Brigade of General Preston's division and a part of the division of Brigadier General Bushrod Johnson. The battle was fierce and for two hours that afternoon there would be many advances and counter advances by both sides.³¹

The Second Minnesota Battery had been performing admirably during the day's fight. Its efforts on the right side of Davis' division had kept the Confederates from forming and extending their left so that they could not flank Davis' division. Three times they stopped the Confederates from trying to accomplish this task.³²

The Second Minnesota Battery was not able to have the effect that they did without the support of the soldiers from the Eighty-First Indiana Volunteers whose

command had now been taken over by Major Calloway by order of Carlin at 2:30 P.M. When Calloway had arrived at the Eighty-First Indiana Volunteers at 2:45 P.M. he found them positioned about fifty yards in rear of and supporting the Second Minnesota Battery and they had not yet been engaged in combat with the enemy. About five minutes after arriving Calloway received an order directly from Davis to move the regiment about two hundred yards to the right and front of the Second Minnesota Battery and to support what Davis thought were the Thirty-Eighth Volunteers who were deeply engaged with the Confederates. Calloway did as he was told and moved forward and positioned his regiment where the right of his regiment was resting in a wooded timberline that was covered with heavy growth and the left of his regiment was positioned on a crest of a hill and covered by the slight crest above them.

Calloway identified a regiment to his right front that he believed Davis had been talking about. The regiment he observed was involved in a tremendous fight with the confederates who were three hundred yards to their front and advancing. Calloway immediately had his regiment fire upon the Confederates and their fires sent the Confederates back in confusion relieving the Seventeenth of the withering fire, which they had been enduring. As this was happening a large Confederate force had been moving to the left of Calloway's position against the Brigades of Carlin and Heg.³³

As Davis' brigades felt the pressure of the Confederate push his forces pulled back. His division artillery officer, Hotchkiss, also had the artillery pull back. Hotchkiss' goal was to pull the Second Minnesota Battery as well as a section of the Eleventh Indiana Battery, which had been positioned, to the left of the Second Minnesota

Battery. There was a piece of ground about two hundred and fifty yards wide to his rear and he wanted the artillery to pull back across it, slowly and in line with the troops.

Unfortunately he was unable to accomplish this. The men who were part of the Indiana section panicked and stampeded their caissons and guns through the Second Minnesota Battery's left section, nearly causing the loss of that section's guns. Fortunately, Lieutenant Harder who was in charge of the left section of the Second Minnesota Battery remained calm during the episode and kept his section safe.³⁴

While Davis' two brigades received the attack of the Confederates, the Confederate soldiers whom Calloway's regiment, the Eighty-First Indiana Volunteers, had just pushed back gained some courage and attacked Calloway's regiment again. Calloway's regiment was able to stop the confederate attack.³⁵ The enemy force that Van Cleve and Davis were fighting was large and very concentrated.

Davis' forces began to fall back and so too did Van Cleve's forces on Davis' left. Davis' left brigade under the command of Colonel Heg tried to maintain its position suffering great loss. Heg had requested reinforcements and Davis had sent him Carlin's reserve regiment, the Twenty-First of Illinois. Another part of the reinforcements he received was some artillery support from Hotchkiss' guns. Hotchkiss ordered Lieutenant Woodbury to place his guns of the Second Minnesota Battery in a position on the right of the new line that the Union forces had formed and gave him the orders to engage the enemy. Woodbury immediately did as he was ordered.³⁶ Colonel Heg, in the process of leading his soldiers to hold their position and to fight as hard as their hearts would let them was shot in the bowels as he directed their actions. Woodbury was also severely

wounded in the left arm.³⁷ Heg's forces, with Heg losing blood and his life quickly, then fell back from this position.

The Eighty-First Illinois, still under command of Calloway and positioned by Davis to protect the right of his artillery batteries had come under attack.³⁸ They were now completely unsupported on their left because the brigades of Heg and Carlin had pulled back as well as the Second Minnesota Battery. While the rest of Davis' division had been pulling back, Calloway had adjusted his lines and pulled the left side of his unit to the rear to provide protection on his left side. This was a successful maneuver and he was able to check the progress of the Confederates. At about the same time that this happened, the Confederates attacked violently on the right of Calloway's line. Concerned that he would be flanked and that his regiment would be captured, he had his regiment withdraw about two hundred yards to the woods line that was along the road. He then moved his regiment to the other side of the road to take up a position in the woods behind a fieldwork that had been hastily constructed of rails.³⁹

By now, the Confederates were putting tremendous pressure on the whole Union line around Davis. Davis had called for reinforcements and as his forces fought to save their lives, a brigade under the command of Colonel Charles G. Harker from Wood's division reported to Davis. Davis took Harker's brigade and placed it in the rear of Heg's brigade and ordered them to pass through Heg's brigade and to attack the enemy.

Soon after the arrival of Harker's brigade and his integration into the battle, General Wood arrived from Lee and Gordon's Mill at around 3:30 P.M. on Davis' right side with Colonel George Buell's brigade of his own division and Colonel Sidney

Barnes' brigade of Brigadier General H. P. Van Cleve's division.⁴⁰ About the same time, a brigade under the command of Laiboldt, from Sheridan's division, arrived too. The timing of the arrival of these new soldiers was perfect, for as they were arriving the Confederate forces were trying to attack and pass to the right of Davis' division. It was at this time that the Eighty-First was being pushed back. It was Buell's brigade in support of Carlin that felt the power of this surge and attack by the Confederates. Buell's brigade was almost overrun and was driven back, but they reformed and along with the brigades from Laiboldt and Barnes, pushed back this effort by the Confederates to flank Davis on the right. Shortly thereafter another brigade, as ordered forward by Rosecrans, under the command of Colonel Bradley from Sheridan's division arrived at Davis' position.⁴¹ Davis had Bradley move to the rear of Carlin's brigade and gave them the orders to pass to the front of Carlin's brigade and assume the battle.⁴²

Bradley followed the orders and moved to Carlin's position. Carlin rallied and organized what troops he could and along with Buell, Laiboldt, and Barnes led them forward in an attack on the Confederates. Calloway's regiment, the Eighty First Indiana Volunteers, also moved forward from its fieldworks. The attack by Carlin and the Fifty-Eighth Indiana from Buell's Brigade was heroic, but was to no avail. The Confederates numbered too many and were in double lines pressing against Carlin. As Carlin's forces fell back the colors for the Twenty-First Illinois Volunteers were left on the field. Calloway, seeing what was happening, had his troops open an oblique fire to the left and forced the Confederates, who took many casualties from Calloway's fire, to retreat. Calloway's regiment was able to recover the colors of the Twenty-First Illinois

Volunteers. The Eighty-First then covered for the One Hundred and First Ohio as they recovered the Eighth Indiana Battery that had been taken by the Confederates. It was at this point that the brigade of Bradley from Sheridan's division had relieved Carlin.⁴³

All of Davis' forces had now fallen to the rear and had been replaced by fresh troops from other commands except the Eighty-first under Calloway. They continued to struggle against the Confederates throughout the afternoon. Twice the Confederates had tried to take Davis' position but the Union forces were able to hold.⁴⁴ It was 4:00 P.M. and the Union forces under Davis had stalled the Confederate attack and were able to maintain their position along the La Fayette Road.⁴⁵

As soon as the fresh troops had arrived to replace Davis' division he had his men fall back several hundred yards from where they had so bravely fought and bivouac.⁴⁶ Their withdrawal was done in very good order.⁴⁷ By 5:00 P.M. the Union army had been able to finally drive back the Confederate forces into the woods east of the Viniard Farm.⁴⁸

The field and the woods in around the Viniard Farm were, as expected, covered with the dead and injured of this battle between the two forces. Davis' division had itself lost over one-third of its number as either killed or wounded and the commander of his third brigade, Colonel Heg, had been mortally wounded. In addition to the large number of casualties from the day's battle the Union forces also captured a large number of prisoner's.⁴⁹

Since Bragg was unable to successfully make an assault and defeat the Union line on the left side where Davis had been defending, he made an attempt at 2:00 P.M. to

attack the right side of the Union lines.⁵⁰ Braggs' attack was against the Union divisions of Reynolds and Van Cleve. The attack met with some success, but the Union forces rallied and the divisions of Negley and Brannan were pushed into the fight and Bragg's forces were driven back. The sun set over the horizon and the combat eventually ceased.

While Davis' brigades commanded by Carlin and Heg were engaged in the heated combat of the day, Post's brigade was having an easier time. His brigade had awakened on the morning of the nineteenth to a chilly morning. They were on the top of Lookout Mountain some ten to twelve miles from the battlefield. Post's soldiers could see that there was a tremendous battle taking place on the valley floor below their position and they could hear and see the firing of muskets and cannon from the participants. The smoke from the weapons filled the valley, as did the dust generated by the force's movements.⁵¹

Post's brigade was posted at Stevens Gap to protect supply trains. His brigade had arrived about a mile short of Stevens Gap at 11:00 P.M. and bivouacked for the night of the eighteenth of September after having marched some twenty three miles the day before. At 2:00 A.M. on the morning of the nineteenth of September Post had received a message from McCook telling him that he was, "to hold that position [Steven's Gap] at all hazards, but if compelled to abandon the gap, to retire along mountain road to Chattanooga, contesting the ground inch by inch." Following the orders that he had been given, Post organized his brigade to hold the position at Stevens Gap so that it would be protected if it were attacked from any direction and to also provide security and

protection for the supply trains that he was guarding. For the day this is where Post's brigade remained.⁵²

The night of the nineteenth and into the morning of the twentieth of September, the Union forces on the battlefield, though tired and exhausted, were in excellent spirits and were confident that they would have final victory.⁵³ They had been fighting what they knew to be a larger force all of the past day and they had held their ground. The general officers of the Union army were also pleased with the success of the day's fighting. They knew that Bragg's desire was to conceal his main attack on the Union left by the feint he had shown to the center of the Union forces under the presumption that the Union center was at Lee and Gordon's Mills. With the feint, Bragg had planned to attack the Union forces on the left flank with the massing of his forces, as he had done to the union right at Murfreesboro. He would push down through the center of the Union line and eventually push to the right of the Union forces causing destruction. This would eventually lead to occupying the road to Chattanooga in force, thus cutting the union forces off from their supplies and in the end defeating them. As Davis' soldiers rested from the day's battle, Davis had them stack-arms so that they could be issued new ammunition to replenish their empty cartridge boxes and eat their dinners.⁵⁴

The battle of the nineteenth had been a day of battle where the lines charged one another taking and retaking ground. The night of the nineteenth Rosecrans had a meeting of his general officers at his headquarters at the Widow Glenn's house. From this meeting McCook, had been given the orders to maintain his picket line until it was attacked and driven back. Davis' division, which was on the left of McCook's force,

after being driven back, was then to tie into Thomas's right, and McCook's line was to extend then from Davis, who was tied into Thomas, to the Widow Glenn's house.⁵⁵ In addition to this, Rosecrans gave the orders to Crittenden to place his pickets forward as well and Wood's and Van Cleve's divisions were to move to the rear and remain at the seam between Thomas' and McCook's units so that they could provide support when called upon or when needed. Additionally it was arranged that Wilder's brigade should be attached to McCook to receive orders from him as to where and when it would be used.

Davis had received his order from McCook at about 3:00 A.M. in the morning on the twentieth of September. Following the direction in the orders, he had his division move to the fork of the road behind Rosecrans' Headquarters at the Widow Glenn's House. There he began to place his forces and wait till daybreak when he believed he would receive further orders.⁵⁶ Before dawn the next morning, the units that were designated to move had all done so and they had built as best as they could barriers of logs and rocks to protect their positions. At dawn, Rosecrans rode the line of his command.

Thomas' forces were arrayed from the left to right with Baird, Johnson, Palmer, Reynolds, and Brannan. During the night of the nineteenth Thomas had received word from Baird on the extreme left that the left side of his division did not reach all the way to the road to Reed's Bridge as had been hoped. Thomas Requested that Negley's division be sent to him so that it could be placed on Baird's left and rear so that the flank would be secured from an assault that he was expecting the Confederates to make.

As Rosecrans rode his line at daybreak, Bragg listened and anticipated that Polk, as ordered, was going to attack at daybreak on the twentieth of September. During the early morning there was a heavy fog over the battlefield and there was no attack on Polk's part. Concerned that his plan was not being carried out, Bragg sent a messenger to find Polk and order him to make an attack. At 9:30 A.M., Polk opened an attack on the left side of the Union forces.⁵⁷

The previous evening, Rosecrans had not given very specific orders with respect to the exact placement of the divisions of the Twentieth Corps under McCook's command. Based on the instructions that he had been given, McCook had placed his divisions as he chose within the boundaries that Rosecrans had given him. He placed Lytle's Brigade from Sheridan's division on the right and to the rear of the Widow Glenn's House a short distance in advance of the hill where he would place Davis' division. Behind and to the right of Lytle's brigade he placed the brigades of Laiboldt and Walworth from Sheridan's division, with Colonel Walworth commanding them. McCook then took the brigades from Davis' division, Carlin's and Heg's (now under the command of Colonel John Martin) and placed them as a reserve to the left and in the rear of the line on an elevated ridge, which ran west of and parallel to the Chattanooga and La Fayette road.⁵⁸ McCook's reason for putting Carlin and Martin in the reserve as he had placed them was because of the exorbitant amount of casualties that they had received from the previous day's battle. Davis' division had lost two-fifths of its effective strength and all that they could now muster was approximately fourteen hundred soldiers in total.⁵⁹

Davis' left side of his division was resting on the right of Crittenden's corps. Davis in occupying this position formed his lines and placed his artillery batteries, the Second Minnesota and the Eighth Wisconsin Batteries, in position on a high wooded hill a few hundred yards west of the road leading to Crawfish Spring. His artillery would remain at this location for the most of the day, covering the Chattanooga Road and would fire no more than six shots during the coming day's battle.⁶⁰ In preparation for the anticipated battle, Davis had all of his soldiers replenish their ammunition to sixty rounds per man. All of these movements had taken place during the night and this was the position of McCook's forces when Rosecrans would arrive at his position while riding his line.⁶¹

In addition to Carlin's and Martin's brigades, at about 6:00 A.M., McCook also received Colonel J.T. Wilder's mounted infantry brigade, as had been planned at the meeting that was held by Rosecrans the previous night. McCook took Wilder's brigade, armed with Spencer rifles, and had it separated into two elements. He placed two regiments of Wilder's brigade, along with the artillery, on Sheridan's right and the other two regiments posted on the right of Negley's position, which was to the left and front of Lytle's position.⁶² Crittenden placed his two divisions on the eastern side of Missionary Ridge in order to be ready to support either the right or the left. As Rosecrans made his tour of the lines on the morning of the twentieth he was not pleased with the placement of McCook's forces or Crittenden's forces and ordered them to make changes per his guidance.

At About 7:00 A.M., McCook received an order from Brigadier General J. A. Garfield, Chief of Staff, which would fulfill the request to have Negley moved over to Thomas' location. The order told McCook to have Negley move to General Thomas' left to cover the left of his formation. McCook was then to fill the vacancy left in his line by the removal of Negley.⁶³

Rosecrans, as part of his new guidance to McCook, ordered McCook to adjust his right and move Davis' division to the left and have it close up compactly on Crittenden's right. Rosecrans would later write of this encounter, "I found General McCook's right too far up on the crest, and General Davis in reserve on a wooded hill-side west of and parallel to the Dry Road. I mentioned these defects to the general [McCook], desiring Davis to be brought down at once, moved more to the left and placed in close column by division, doubled on the center in a sheltered position."⁶⁴

It was near 10:00 A.M. when Davis received orders from General McCook to move to the left and close upon General Crittenden's right. Davis immediately complied and as he moved his division along the elevated ridge for a distance of about a mile he discovered that General Crittenden's troops were moving to the front, something that he had not been told would happen. Davis did as he was instructed and closed his left on Crittenden's right and moved forward, with his lines mirroring Crittenden's. They moved as one for a few hundred yards until they had reached a field that had been just in front of Davis' original position. Crittenden's troops were following orders they had been given to move that had been given at about 9:00 A.M.⁶⁵

Rosecrans proceeded to ride his lines and when he arrived at the left of his lines he grew concerned. It was weak and he was convinced that the first attack by the Confederates would take place there. He returned to Negley to hurry him, but Negley had not moved because McCook had not yet arrived to relieve him. Rosecrans then had the brigade commanded by General John Beatty, that was Negley's reserve, move to the left and he told Negley to follow with the remainder of his division when McCook had relieved them. Rosecrans then decided that he could not wait on McCook to move one of his units into the position that Negley vacated because he was taking too long. Rosecrans had Crittenden move Wood's division with two brigades and Barnes of Van Cleve's division to the front to relieve and occupy Negley's position. He had the remaining brigades of Van Cleve's division fall to the rear of Wood to assume a reserve role. Rosecrans also told Jefferson C. Davis to take his two brigades and move to the right, which was some distance to the north and east of his current position, and take a position along "the skirt of timber bordering the field" to his front.⁶⁶

While the directing of troops was taking place by Rosecrans, McCook had ridden with General Sheridan to the position vacated by Negley. Here they met Wood who had already occupied the vacancy left by Negley in compliance with the orders he had received from Rosecrans. Wood told McCook that his left rested on General Brannan's right, and that his orders were to close up with Brannan. In seeing the location of Wood forces, McCook noticed a portion of rude barricades on Wood right that was not occupied by troops. McCook gave orders to Sheridan to bring forward one of his brigades to fill up the hole between Wood and Wilder. As McCook turned from giving these orders to

Sheridan, he saw Davis' forces, about one hundred yards from the vacant barricade, marching forward towards the barricade. Davis was complying with the orders that he had received from Rosecrans moments earlier. McCook directed Davis to continue and to occupy, with one brigade, the crude breastworks that had been erected by troops who had previously occupied the position. McCook also told Davis to keep well closed on the left. Davis' remaining brigade was to remain in reserve. When Laiboldt's brigade, of Sheridan's division came forward as McCook had just ordered he had them posted in column on Davis' left and rear as support.⁶⁷

Davis, following McCook's orders, ordered Carlin's brigade of his division to move forward and occupy the breastwork position on the right of Colonel Buell's brigade of Brigadier General Thomas J. Wood's division. Davis had Martin's brigade move to a small ravine on the right flank of Carlin's brigade and ordered them to lie down. They would be the reserve to Carlin's brigade.⁶⁸ As Davis was positioning his brigades, Buell came to him and informed him that he had been ordered to move to his left in order to close up the lines in that direction. As Buell's brigade began its movement, Davis in following a new order he had just received from McCook, began to move Martin's brigade into the position vacated by Buell's brigade.⁶⁹

The order to Davis from McCook had come as part of last minute instruction from Rosecrans to McCook. Before departing, Rosecrans had told McCook that his lines were too thin and that he needed to close them up as they were strung out too far and that he needed to have them close up on the left no matter what happened. Thus General Davis had been ordered by Rosecrans to close Martin's brigade on Buell of Wood's division.⁷⁰

Rosecrans then returned to the situation on the left of his line and found that he was not confident that it was strong enough to stand against the Confederates should they attack in that direction. He would be right.

As the Confederates attacked Rosecrans' forces on the left he realized that he was going to need reinforcements. He sent a message to McCook with a time of 10:10 A.M. ordering McCook to, "make immediate disposition to withdraw the right so as to spare as much force as possible to re-enforce Thomas." The message continued, "the left must be held at all hazards even if the right is withdrawn wholly back to the present left. Select a good position back this way and be ready to start reinforcements to Thomas at a moment's warning."⁷¹

Within five minutes of receiving this message, McCook received another order from Rosecrans that had been sent at 10:30 A.M. The order told McCook to send two brigades of General Sheridan's division to support General Thomas immediately and to send the third brigade of Sheridan's division as soon as McCook could draw in his lines.⁷²

McCook immediately complied with this order and ordered the brigades of Lytle and Walworth from Sheridan's division on the extreme right to move at a "double-quick" to support General Thomas. As the two brigades from Sheridan's division were beginning their movement out of position, Wood received orders to move his division from its position on the line just to Davis' left. In so doing it would leave a gap in the line. This gap left by Buell's brigade as it moved to the left, is the gap that Davis would try to move Martin's Brigade into.⁷³

Davis moved Martin's Brigade to fill the vacancy that had previously been occupied by three brigades.⁷⁴ Martin's forces were insufficient to fill this gap.⁷⁵ As the movement by the divisions of Wood and Davis was taking place, Longstreet, who was in command of the left side of the Confederate forces, received his orders to attack the Union forces to his front. Longstreet ordered his troops, which were formed in heavy columns, to move forward and attack. He attacked with the division of Stewart, Bushrod Johnson, and Hindman forming the front, with Law and Kershaw in column of divisions behind Johnson and with Preston's division supporting Hindman.⁷⁶ It was 11:10 A.M. and the attack would prove overwhelming for the Union line.

Buell's brigade had barely moved out of position and Martin's brigade had barely moved into position when the tremendous assault made by the overwhelming Confederate force occurred. Martin's brigade had just moments before been ordered to occupy a small ravine to Carlin's rear and now it had orders to fill the gap that had been made by Wood's departure.

When Martin received the orders to fill Wood's position he obeyed them immediately. He had his force move back by the left flank behind Carlin's brigade to the gap and then had them move by the right flank forward to the breastworks that had been previously built within the gap left by Buell. The three regiments on the right of Martin's brigade reached their position, but the Thirty-Fifth Illinois, the regiment on the left of his brigade had not reached its position, when the Confederates launched their attack. The Confederates had been in the tall weeds in front of Davis' position. As they rose up from the weeds they advanced in line that was four ranks deep and firing heavily at Martin's

brigade. The Confederate line of battle extended from a point well beyond Brannan's right all the way to a point far to the right of the Widow Glenn's House.⁷⁷

Davis' division of 1,200 men was being attacked in, "flank, and rear, as well as in front."⁷⁸ The only force that McCook had to defend against the attack by Longstreet was the two brigades of Davis and Laiboldt's brigade, which was in reserve.

As the fight evolved, the left flank of Martin's brigade was completely exposed as the soldiers from Buell's brigade had moved out of sight to the brigade's left. Soon Martin's brigade was flanked by the Confederates and was receiving deadly enfilading fire. Martin's brigade was very effective against the Confederates that were in their front. Their fire was true and many Confederates fell as they advanced. The problem for Martin's brigade was that there were so many Confederates that soon they were coming over the breastworks that Martin's men was fighting from. When the Confederates mounted the breastworks, Martin's brigade fell back in confusion.⁷⁹

The tremendous numbers and force of the Confederate attack were quickly overcoming Davis' two small brigades and his whole force was starting to be thrown into confusion. Davis' forces fought bravely, but the attack by the Confederates was just too great for Davis' brigades. Davis' division, "received the fire with veteran coolness and returned it with deadly effect for several rounds, and in some instances the musket was used in beating back the enemy."⁸⁰

While Martin's brigade was having its fight with the Confederates, so too was Carlin. Carlin's brigade was to Martin's right and as Carlin would write in his account of the battle, "there were no troops on my right."⁸¹ Carlin had his troops arrayed in this

position with the One Hundred and First Ohio on the left, the Eighty-First Indiana in the center, and the Twenty-First Illinois on the right. These three regiments that were to the front occupied crude breastworks that some one who had previously been in this position had constructed. In the reserve he had placed the Thirty-Eighth Illinois and they were about seventy-five to one hundred yards to the rear of the Eighty-First Indiana behind some breastworks.

Carlin's brigade's activities to this point in the day had been really uneventful. He had moved at about 10:00 A.M. with his division along the ridge that they had occupied for the distance of about a mile, crossed the road and moved into a field forward of their original assigned position. Following more orders he then had his brigade move forward and occupy another position with the array of his regiments such as was described earlier. As he had deployed his command there was no real sign of the Confederates other than the sound of their muskets and artillery being fired somewhere down to his brigade's left. It did seem, however, that the sound was coming closer to his position. Carlin had each of his three forward regiments deploy skirmishers in front of their battle line. While the skirmishers were forward of his position, Carlin rode out across the Lafayette Road for about three to four yards ahead of them two different times to reconnoiter the area. He saw none of the enemy on these two trips. About a minute after he returned from his second ride forward of the skirmishers and had taken a position thirty steps in rear of the Twenty-First Illinois, he began to hear firing coming from the pickets to the front of his brigade.⁸²

The skirmishers he had forward withdrew into his brigade's lines. In a moment the fire between the Union and Confederate forces became extremely intense. The confederate force came at Carlin's brigade with four lines of soldiers. The pressure on Carlin's brigade was great. The pressure on the right flank of Carlin's brigade was too great for the Twenty-First Illinois to withstand any more and it started to break up and fall away. Carlin rode over to Lieutenant Colonel Gilmer, commander of the Thirty-Eighth Illinois, the brigade's reserve, and ordered him to move his regiment to the right to support the Twenty-First Illinois. Gilmer, for a reason unknown, hesitated to give the command, but finally did give the command for his regiment to move. It moved to support the Twenty-First, but it was too late. Gilmer's regiment was overwhelmed and he was wounded and captured in the process.⁸³

The Confederates were now crossing the breastworks in front of the Twenty-First Illinois and were extending their left flank to the rear of Carlin's brigade. The situation was becoming very serious as they were beginning to flank Carlin's brigade and were at the same time placing deadly and effective fire into his ranks from the rear into the Twenty-first Illinois. With the situation desperate and his lines almost completely broken, Carlin gave the order for a hasty retreat. As his brigade fell back, Carlin tried to reorganize it at a position about four yards from where it had just been fighting. This attempt failed as the pressure by the Confederates was too great and he did not have enough officers present to make it happen.⁸⁴

The retreat of Carlin's brigade on Davis' right had made Davis' position very vulnerable and he needed to find a way that he could counter the attack against his

position. As he observed what was happening with his brigades, Davis made his way to Laiboldt who was commanding the brigade that was in reserve in support of Davis. Laiboldt's brigade was in an open field a few hundred yards to the left and rear of Davis' forces. Davis, upon reaching Laiboldt, told him that he needed him to have his forces move immediately into the battle to support Carlin's brigade of Davis' division. Laiboldt immediately complied and moved his forces forward to form a line behind Davis' division. Before Laiboldt was able to get his forces completely in place they received a heavy attack by the Confederates who had just come around the right side of Davis' forces, where Carlin was, unopposed. The only thing that Davis could see that would allow his division to survive capture or complete decimation was for him to have his division pull back. He moved them back a few hundred yards across the field, in which Laiboldt had been moments earlier waiting in reserve, and there received the "full effects of the pursuing enemy's fire."⁸⁵

Davis' division was, "lifted from position and hurled in fragments towards Missionary Ridge."⁸⁶ "So, without fault on the part of either [Davis or Sheridan] of these commanders their lines, terribly thinned by the fierce fighting of the evening before, were forced off the field and pursued by two brigades of Hindman to the high ground west of Dry Valley Road."⁸⁷

The Confederate attack was also too overwhelming for Laiboldt to allow him to be of any resistance to the forces under Longstreet. The confederate fires decimated Laiboldt's brigade. Laiboldt's brigade, when committed to the fight, had tried to deploy into line in order to shot at the Confederates. They were unable to deploy because they

were too close to the Confederates and too compact. The Confederates fired upon Laiboldt's brigade and the brigade's loss was heavy. Laiboldt had his regiments fix bayonets and charge into the woods where the confederates were driving against Davis' forces. Unable to fire their muskets effectively because of the men from Davis' unit who were fleeing the fight, Laiboldt was soon overrun by the Confederates and forced into retreat back to the hills from where he had initiated his supporting attack. The ceaseless fire from the Confederates in his front and on his flanks was too much for his troops.⁸⁸

As McCook saw the enemy forces pushing through the gap and sending Davis' division and Laiboldt's brigade in retreat, he ordered Lytle and Walworth of Sheridan's division to change their front and to return to the point where Carlin's, Martin's and Laiboldt's brigades had been fighting the overwhelming attack by the Confederate force. Additionally, Wilder came to McCook's aid, closed in on Sheridan's right quickly, and attempted to help Lytle and Walworth fight the attack in the gap by the Confederates. Wood's division was soon forced back and Buell's brigade of Wood's division, the last to leave the gap that was being exploited by the Confederates, was routed and as it retreated and allowed Brannan to be struck in the flank.⁸⁹

All that was left to fight the mass of Confederate soldiers in the gap were the brigades of Lytle and Walworth which had earlier reversed their march and who had joined with Wilder and Harrison. These men's units fought bravely and were able to hold the advance of the Confederates for a brief period. Eventually, the Confederate forces turned the left side of these brigades and they were forced to withdraw to escape from being encircled. Lytle was killed at this point and the Union army gave up thousands of

prisoners, forty guns, and a large number of wagons.⁹⁰ The whole right side of Rosecrans' Union line was in disarray.

Davis' men fought bravely and had made several stands against the pressing enemy. It became apparent that the range of his own artillery could not support the infantry of Carlin and Martin's brigades. Davis had his brigades check the Confederate's attack long enough to enable the artillery batteries of Davis' command to be removed safely from the battlefield.

As Davis was issuing orders and trying to rally soldiers back into the fight, his brigades under the command of Martin and Carlin were trying to recover from the overwhelming attack that they had just received. Carlin initially ordered his brigade to fall back about four hundred yards from the place where it had been overrun. He was unable to reform his men, primarily because he had lost all but one field grade officer from his command and but a few company grade officers had made it to his position. Carlin had watched as Laiboldt's brigade moved to his left to take his place and watched as they were pushed back. Carlin remained in his position near Widow's Glenn for a half hour or more gathering any man he could find from the scattered brigade to continue the fight against the Confederates. In total his staff and he were able to round up about four hundred men.

It became evident to Carlin that he was not going to be able to gather any more support. He had not received orders on what he should be doing in this type of situation and from the time his brigade had been pushed back earlier in the afternoon he had not seen Davis or Davis' staff. Carlin was frustrated. As he pondered his next move a

column, led by Sheridan, passed about a quarter of a mile to Carlin's rear near the Dry Valley Road, followed by some remnants of Carlin's brigade and Martin's brigade. Sheridan was going to either cross the mountains to Bridgeport or go to Rossville and from that point he was going to try and communicate with Thomas with the hope that he could join Thomas' forces. Carlin joined the column as the rear guard of the column. Just before Carlin joined Sheridan's column, Captain T. W. Morrison, who had some of Davis' staff officers with him and the division's flag being carried by Lieutenant Reynolds, one of Davis' staff officers, was brought to him. Carlin took Major Calloway, his only field officer remaining from his brigade, and placed him in command of the Second Brigade and Carlin assumed command of what he believed to be the division. When Sheridan's force got to the Dry Valley road, they found that the Confederates had also been paralleling their route of movement. Sheridan then decided that he would move towards Rossville with the hope of joining Thomas.⁹¹

While Carlin moved from the battlefield to try and reform his brigade, Davis remained on the battlefield to direct further attacks by the brigades of Laiboldt and the others in the hopes of maintaining the right wing of the union line.⁹² He made many attempts to reform his line, but because of the large number of officers that he had lost in the fighting over the two days this task was very difficult. Finally, about two and a half miles back, near McFarland's farm, Davis was able to reform some of the scattering Union army and create a force of eight hundred to one thousand men. In doing this he also found a place that was suitable for the placement of his artillery and he ordered the

Second Minnesota Battery into position to cover the road and to allow time for Davis to form the force.⁹³

While Davis reformed his command, General Negley passed Davis' division and continued in their effort to get to Rossville.⁹⁴ As Negley approached closer to Rossville he ran into Carlin and informed him that Thomas was still fighting and that there were Confederate cavalry pickets between them and Thomas and that Carlin should go and provide relief to Thomas. Carlin only had six hundred men that he was able to gather from the two brigades of Davis' division. In response to Negley's remark he told Negley that he had fallen under command of Sheridan and that Sheridan had almost his whole division intact and that he believed it better that Negley ask Sheridan to take the mission.⁹⁵

In the meantime, Davis had told the Second Minnesota Battery under the command of Captain Hotchkiss, His division artillery commander, to remain in position at McFarland's Farm. Davis was going to make his way to Rossville with the intention of gathering more scattered troops that were going to the rear. He was going to rally them for the purpose of bringing them back to support General Thomas who was decisively engaged with the enemy. Enroute to Rossville, after gathering more scattered soldiers along the way, he came upon Carlin and received the command of his division back from him.⁹⁶

Once Carlin and Martin's Brigades were formed, Carlin and Martin reported to Davis. The commander of the Tenth Ohio Infantry Lieutenant Colonel Ward also reported to Davis. In all, Davis had a force of between 2,500 and 3,000 soldiers. Davis

gave the men that were now formed a few minutes to get water. He then moved the force forward towards the battlefield with the intent of supporting General Thomas' corps, which he knew was still engaged in combat with the Confederates.⁹⁷

The five divisions under Thomas held firm to their positions. The Confederates continued their attack and concentrated their efforts on the left and right flanks of the Union forces. General Thomas could sense that the right side of the Union lines where Davis had been was not doing well since there was an exorbitant amount of pressure from the Confederate forces on that side of the force. He did not know that the Union forces under McCook and Crittenden had been forced from the field of battle.

Bragg was intent on continuing to try and turn the left of the Thomas' lines so that he could cut him off from Chattanooga and continued to prepare his forces for a heavy assault on the right. Bragg took charge of his forces himself and extended his lines to his left and attempted to make a wheeling move to the left to try and envelop Thomas' forces and strike them from the rear. The effort to make this move failed.

Breckenridge who was at the end of the confederate line and positioned on the Chattanooga Road was detached from the main body of the rebel troops that were engaged in the movement. When he attempted to make the attack, he was met by three brigades and forced back to his original line.⁹⁸ When he got to his original line he found that the other Confederate troops who had participated in the attack had also been repulsed. As the Confederates fell back, Thomas knew that he was in a tough predicament. His forces were tired from the continuous attacks that they had received all

day. His subordinate commanders were continuing to request reinforcements to help them hold their positions.

Thomas took the division under the command of Brannan, which had received a flank attack when General McCook's forces had been attacked and had fled, and placed him on "Horseshoe Ridge" and also placed his artillery on the spurs to the rear of Brannan.⁹⁹ Thomas then tied his other forces into Brannan's division. Thomas then went to the crest of the hill and met with General Wood, who confirmed that there were Confederate troops moving upon their position. Thomas, not aware of what had happened earlier on the right of the Union lines had Wood place his forces to the left of Brannan's position. No sooner had Wood placed his forces in their position than he came under a massive assault from the Confederates. Wood's units were able to hold against wave after wave of attack by the Confederates. It was about 2 PM when this fighting took place.¹⁰⁰

By 3:00 P.M., Granger, who had been at Rossville with his three brigades in reserve, had arrived at Thomas's position on Horseshoe Ridge.¹⁰¹ Thomas had Granger throw two of his brigades into the battle against the determined Confederates. The Union forces were able to drive back the Confederates again but at a terrific cost of casualties. It was now close to 4 P.M. and Longstreet was still determined to take the ridge from the Union forces. Longstreet asked for reinforcements from Bragg. Bragg had none to provide, so Longstreet called up his reserve of three brigades. Supported by Stewart's Division, they attacked the ridge another time, but again were driven back.

Davis, in the mean time had formed his force and moved towards Thomas to support him. On arriving near Thomas' position he was intercepted by a staff officer who had been sent by Colonel Post to inform Davis of Post's status. Post was moving down from guarding the supply trains on the mountains and was still in the vicinity of Crawfish Spring. He would not be able to join Davis before the nightfall as had been ordered by McCook. In the meantime, Davis was in the process of forming his lines on the right of Thomas when he received a message with information from Brigadier General Garfield, Rosecrans' Chief of Staff, that Thomas was pulling back and that Davis was to move to Rossville.¹⁰²

Darkness fell and the soldiers under Thomas's command, Wood, Brannan, and Granger, still occupied Horseshoe Ridge. However, their problems were not over. Someone, without authorization, had ordered the ammunition supply trains for Thomas's forces back to Chattanooga. So, his forces were dangerously low on ammunition. Brannan, Wood, and Granger redistributed ammunition among their forces and also had their forces rummage through the belongings of those who had been casualties of the day's battle and look for any ammunition that had not been spent. Thomas's forces used this ammunition to continue to repel the Confederate charges and were told to prepare to use their bayonets. The final attacks by the Confederates were defeated in this way.

Davis' division did not get back into the fight that day. After forming at the McFarland Farm, Davis had marched his division with Martin in the lead followed by Carlin towards Thomas at Horse Shoe Ridge with the intent to join the battle. They marched for an hour through the woods. It was dark. Davis then heard that Thomas had

disengaged the Confederates and was falling back to Rossville and wanted Davis to join him there. Davis had his division get on Dry valley Road and march to Rossville where they arrived about midnight.¹⁰³

While the Second and Third Brigades of Davis' Division had been fighting the heated battle of the day, Post's First Brigade of Davis' Division had continued, as ordered, with their assigned mission, "to hold Stevens Gap at all hazard," guarding the supply trains of the Union army.¹⁰⁴ At about 4:00 A.M. on the morning of the twentieth of September, Post had received an order from McCook to send the supply trains that he had been guarding on to Chattanooga via the Mountain Road and for Post to make his way to the battlefield by way of Crawfish Spring.¹⁰⁵

With the orders in hand, Post had his brigade awakened while "it was not yet daylight" by an orderly who rode his horse among the beds of the sleeping men. In the damp of the cold morning, on the top of Lookout Mountain, the orderly spread the word for the soldiers of First Brigade to get up and be ready to move out at any moment.¹⁰⁶ As reveille was sounded the soldiers packed their equipment and had breakfast and tried to huddle close to the fires that were burning to stay warm against the morning cold. The feedback from the battle of the previous day was nonexistent and they were yearning to know the result, who was being engaged, and how the engagement had gone. They did know, from the sounds they had heard the previous day and were starting to hear now that there was a large battle going on just ten miles from their location and that it covered a large area of land. For the present all they could do was speculate as to what the result of the previous days fighting had been and what was in store for them that day.¹⁰⁷

Shortly after daybreak, the First Brigade began to move in a northerly direction along the top of the mountain towards Chattanooga, with the supply trains. The supply trains and the First Brigade marched for several miles together towards Chattanooga. After a few miles the trains continued in their march north to Chattanooga. Along with the trains, Post also sent sixty seven confederate prisoners under the charge of Sergeant McCune who was commanding the provost guard of Post's brigade. The First Brigade, under Colonel Post's command, broke off from the supply trains and moved down a road that led east down the mountain to the valley below and Crawfish Spring.¹⁰⁸

The descent down the mountain was steep and difficult. It took the men of the brigade an hour to get to the valley floor. The most difficult part of the descent was keeping the artillery pieces from falling down the mountains, as they were difficult to move around.¹⁰⁹ Once in the valley, Post found some guides, and the brigade moved down the valley toward the fighting at Chickamauga. As they moved through the valley they came across numerous men in "butternut jeans." To the soldiers of the brigade it was obvious that these men were Confederate soldiers who had thrown down their weapons and were either fleeing from the battle or were possible spies from the Confederate forces. Post's brigade did nothing to stop these fleeing Confederates, as they did not have the capability to take care of them if they did take them prisoner and there really was no evidence that could link them to being Confederate soldiers.¹¹⁰

As the Brigade moved down the road in the valley they came to a fork in the road. Post was not sure which road to take. Because he was not sure of what was going on in the battle he took the road that forked to the left and that was closest to the mountain. His

brigade progressed down the Ringgold Road and came into some contact with enemy troops. In one of these encounters Colonel Post had his horse wounded while he was on it. Since the battle seemed to be closer now, Post decided it appropriate to deploy some skirmishers as the cannon fire that was to his front and that attacks on his front and flanks was telling him that that he was getting into a serious situation and that he was in danger of potentially being cutoff from the main force of the Union army. The skirmishers were put under the control of Captain Robert Hale, the provost marshal of Post's staff. They moved to the front of Post's brigade. Post also put an advance guard forward.¹¹¹

Post's brigade was feeling confident as it moved forward. Still they did not know what their proximity was to the friendly forces. If the situation was as they thought, they were probably on the right flank of the Union forces. If the battle had been going better than they thought then they felt that they were well in the rear of the friendly force. In the worse case, if the Confederates had driven the Union forces back, the soldiers of the First Brigade guessed that they would be in the rear left wing of the Confederate army. Colonel Post, no matter what the brigade's position, wanted to get into battle as he had not been pleased with the assignment that he had been given to guard the supply trains.¹¹²

As Post's brigade advanced and approached Crawfish Spring, they ran into two brigades of cavalry of the First Division of the Cavalry Corps. Colonel Archibald P. Campbell commanded the First Brigade of cavalry and Colonel Daniel M. Ray commanded the Second Brigade of cavalry. These two brigades were under the command of General Robert B. Mitchell, the Cavalry Corps commander. Not knowing that this was Post's brigade, a friendly unit, that they had encountered, Mitchell had his

cavalry positioned to charge at Post's brigade. Upon discovering that Post's unit was friendly they joined forces. It was 1:00 P.M. on the twentieth of September and the soldiers in Post's brigade learned from the cavalymen the results of the day's battle.¹¹³

Post's soldiers were told that the Confederates had been driving the union forces back and that they had been separated from the Union Army and that they were in the rear of the left wing of the Confederate forces. Mitchell told Post that all communications were cut off with McCook's corps and that at present it would be impossible for Post to get his brigade to where McCook wanted him to move it. The worst scenario that was imagined earlier had come to pass. Post dispatched Captain Robert Hale, from his command to find McCook and to tell him of the situation. Mitchell then assumed command of both the cavalry and Post's brigade and formed them in a line together along the edge of a large field that was situated between the Lee and Gordon's Mill and Crawfish Springs to prepare for an attack that they suspected would happen at any moment by Wheeler.¹¹⁴ It was 3:00 P.M. and Wheeler began his attack. For two hours the Union forces of Mitchell and Post were able to hold out against the attack.¹¹⁵

As the Union forces under Post and Mitchell broke contact with Wheeler's forces Post began to understand his situation better. The Confederates in the "butternut jeans" that Post's brigade had seen earlier were really part of the rear left wing of the rebel army and that they had been surprised to see Post's brigade of infantry coming off the mountain with artillery. It caught the Confederates so off-guard that they discarded their weapons and opened their lines because they thought that they were about to become engaged with Post's brigade as well as Mitchell's cavalry. They thought that they were

outnumbered and had been outmaneuvered. Because of Post's lack of understanding of the battlefield and what had been going on he had not perceived the situation as a threat. He and his soldiers had been very fortunate that the Confederates that they had encountered had been confused.¹¹⁶

Post and Mitchell maneuvered their force back to the west towards Missionary Ridge to escape being overrun by a Confederate force, which was around them and to cover the withdrawal of trains and ambulances.¹¹⁷ Post's brigade was first to maneuver back up the road and Mitchell's cavalry acted as their rear guard. As they moved up the road the soldiers of Post's brigade saw some testimony to the carnage of the battle that had taken place over the past two days at Chickamauga. They passed by one place where they found in plain view the legs and arms of soldiers that had been amputated by surgeons. They also saw the bodies of soldiers who had been killed in the day's battle. The march back up the road was without any fighting.¹¹⁸

As Post's brigade continued, they started to receive reports from stragglers as to the status of the other two brigades of Davis' Division and how they had been soundly attacked and beaten. When it was dark, Post's brigade stopped to rest for a moment and rations were issued to the soldiers. They then proceeded on to Chattanooga where they were to meet up with Davis and the other two brigades from their division.

Enroute to Chattanooga, Post's brigade spent two hours crossing a creek and then continued to march for four miles. All the while, Mitchell's cavalry was with Post's brigade. The road that they traveled was dry and dusty. It made breathing difficult and forced some soldiers to be placed on wagons so that they could continue the march and it

caused others to become so dried out that their noses bled.¹¹⁹ By 4:00 A.M. the next morning the brigade and cavalry finally halted and the soldiers were given a chance to sleep. Davis' division was reformed.

¹*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 498.

²*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 118.

³*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 54.

⁴*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1 529.

⁵*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 120, 498.

⁶*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 485; and Thomas Yoseloff, *Campaigns of the Civil War*, vol. 4, (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, Publisher, 1963), 196.

⁷*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 78, 485; and Yoseloff, 196.

⁸Ephraim A. Otis, *Battle of Chickamauga, Campaigns in Kentucky and Tennessee, 1862-1864, Papers of the Military Historical Society of Massachusetts*, vol. VII, (Boston, MA: The Military Historical Society of Massachusetts, 1908), 349.

⁹Thomas B. Van Horne, *History of the Army of the Cumberland, Its Organization, Campaigns, and Battles*, vol 1, (Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1988), 338.

¹⁰*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 498, 528.

¹¹*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 50, 498.

¹²*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 498, 503.

¹³*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 503.

¹⁴*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 515.

¹⁵*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 521.

¹⁶*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 515; and William P. Carlin, "Military Memoirs", *National Tribune*, 16 April 1885, 1.

¹⁷*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 498, 499; and Otis, 349.

¹⁸*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 515, 522.

¹⁹*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 499.

²⁰*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 529.

²¹*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 529.

²²*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 529.

²³*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 499; and Carlin, 1.

²⁴*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 529.

²⁵Otis, 349.

²⁶Van Horne, 336.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 337.

²⁸*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 447.

²⁹*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 504, 516. Hotchkiss' response to the comment by Carlin:

"I have heard of a report that an occasional shell from the Second Minnesota Battery wounded men in General Carlin's Brigade. Of my own knowledge the statement is unfounded; in fact, in the course of the engagement General Carlin rode up to me, a little to the left and in front of the battery; that his men were occupying an undulation in the ground about 100 yards distant, and remarked, "If your fire is well directed it can do no harm to my troops." I immediately pointed out General Carlin's line to Lieutenant Woodbury, and to each lieutenant commanding sections, and ordered that all firing over them should be at a range not less than 700 or 800 yards; also I rode up to the commanding officer of a battery that had just gone into position on my right and pointed out to him General Carlin's line, and cautioned him against firing into his men. At this juncture the section of the Indiana battery heretofore alluded to commenced firing. I rode up to the lieutenant commanding it, told him our own troops were immediately in front of him, and as, from his position, he could not see the enemy, I ordered him to cease firing. From this time up to the moment the division was retired I remained near the guns of the Second Minnesota Battery, watched closely the movements of the troops in front, and directed the fire of the battery. I repeat, of my own knowledge, not one man of our own

was injured by shot or shell from my guns. I did think an occasional shot from other guns lodged in or near our lines, and so reported to a lieutenant of the battery on my right.”

³⁰*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 516.

³¹*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 499.

³²*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 504.

³³*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 523.

³⁴*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 504.

³⁵*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 523.

³⁶*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 504.

³⁷*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 504.

³⁸Van Horne, 337.

³⁹*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 523.

⁴⁰Otis, 349.

⁴¹*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 74.

⁴²Van Horne, 337.

⁴³*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 524.

⁴⁴*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 524.

⁴⁵Van Horne, 337.

⁴⁶*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 499.

⁴⁷*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 504.

⁴⁸Otis, 350.

⁴⁹*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 499; Yoseloff, *Campaigns of the Civil War*, 197.

⁵⁰Yoseloff, 198.

⁵¹Arnold Gates, *The Rough Side of War; The Civil War Journal of Chesley A. Mosman, 1st Lieutenant, Company D, 59th Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment* (Garden City, New York: The Basin Publishing Company, 1987), 82-83.

⁵²*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 118, 505.

⁵³Yoseloff, 199.

⁵⁴*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 499.

⁵⁵Yoseloff, 201

⁵⁶*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 499.

⁵⁷Yoseloff, 203.

⁵⁸*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 525.

⁵⁹Van Horne, 343.

⁶⁰*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 504.

⁶¹*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 488, 499, 530.

⁶²*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 488.

⁶³*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 489.

⁶⁴*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 58; and Yoseloff, 202.

⁶⁵*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 499, 500, 520, 609.

⁶⁶*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 500, 609.

⁶⁷*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 489, 500.

⁶⁸*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 530; and William P. Carlin, to Edward Ruger, (Letter, Bell Hall, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 18 April 1867).

⁶⁹*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 500.

⁷⁰*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 59.

- ⁷¹*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 489.
- ⁷²*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 489.
- ⁷³*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 490.
- ⁷⁴*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 402.
- ⁷⁵Yoseloff, 206.
- ⁷⁶Otis, 356.
- ⁷⁷*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 490, 530; and Yoseloff, 206.
- ⁷⁸*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 59, 490.
- ⁷⁹*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 530.
- ⁸⁰*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 500.
- ⁸¹*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 517.
- ⁸²*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 517, 520, 525; and Carlin, "Military Memoirs," 4.
- ⁸³*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 522; and Carlin, "Military Memoirs," 4.
- ⁸⁴*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 517, 522, 525.
- ⁸⁵*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 500, 517.
- ⁸⁶Van Horne, 347.
- ⁸⁷Otis, 357.
- ⁸⁸*O.R.*, vol., 30, part 1, 580, 590; and Carlin, "Military Memoirs," 4.
- ⁸⁹*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 490.
- ⁹⁰Yoseoff, 207.
- ⁹¹*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 519, 581; and Carlin, "Military Memoirs," 5-6.
- ⁹²*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 504.

⁹³*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 505; and Carlin, "Military Memoirs," 6.

⁹⁴*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 490.

⁹⁵*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 518; and Carlin, "Military Memoirs," 6.

⁹⁶*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 505, 517; and Carlin, "Military Memoirs," 6.

⁹⁷*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 501.

⁹⁸Yoseloff, 207.

⁹⁹*Ibid.*, 208.

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*, 209.

¹⁰¹*Ibid.*, 210.

¹⁰²*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 501.

¹⁰³Carlin, 6.

¹⁰⁴*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 118.

¹⁰⁵*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 507.

¹⁰⁶Gates, 83.

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 507; and Gates, *The Rough side of War; The Civil War Journal of Chesley A. Mosman, 1st Lieutenant, Company D, 59th Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment*, 83.

¹⁰⁹Gates, 83.

¹¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹¹*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 507; and Gates, 83.

¹¹²Gates, 84.

¹¹³*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 507; and Gates, 84.

¹¹⁴*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 507; and Gates, 84; and Peter Cozzens, *This Terrible Sound* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 466.

¹¹⁵Cozzens, 466.

¹¹⁶Gates, 84.

¹¹⁷Cozzens, 466.

¹¹⁸Gates, 84.

¹¹⁹*Ibid.*

CHAPTER 7

DAVIS' REMAINING YEARS

After Davis arrived in Chattanooga reorganization took place among the command of the Union forces. As a part of these changes in command Davis found himself moved from command of the First Division of the XXth Corps to the command of the Second Division of the XIVth Corps. Davis was not pleased about this change of command. He had been in command of the First Division and had led them from southern Missouri to Chickamauga and he was “warmly attached to them.”¹ With the assignment to this new division, Davis found himself with three new brigade

commanders. These commanders were General James D. Morgan, General John Beatty, and Colonel Dan McCook.

Upon assuming command of the Second Division, which was now located on the Tennessee River in the Sequahachie Valley, Davis received orders from Thomas to move his division to the headwaters of the Tennessee River and back down through the Sequahachie Valley to Chattanooga. Davis took ten days to travel the distance of one hundred and fifty miles to carry out the mission. This mission gave Davis the chance to see how his new division was performing and trained and it also gave him a chance to see terrain that he would possibly have to maneuver his division through in the future.²

By the middle of October of 1863 Davis had made it back to Chattanooga from his mission up to the headwaters of the Tennessee River and he had his division set up camp along the bank of the Tennessee River. Soon after, towards the end of November, General Sherman arrived in Chattanooga from Memphis to reinforce the Union forces. Davis was attached to and placed under the command of Sherman. Davis would find himself under the command of Sherman for the remainder of the war. Upon reporting to Sherman, Davis' division was concentrated on the west bank of the Tennessee River near the mouth of the Northern Chickamauga Creek and was on the far right side of Sherman's forces.³ The stage was set for the Union forces to engage the Confederate troops under Bragg besieging Chattanooga.

There were three pieces to the battle of Chattanooga for the Union army. One of these pieces included Sherman's command attacking across the Tennessee River against the Confederate right on the north end of Missionary Ridge. Davis' part in this attack

was to guard the pontoon bridges that the Union forces had placed across the river to facilitate the attack and to also guard the left flank of the Union forces from any attack by the Confederates.⁴ Though this was more of a supporting role for Davis and not really to his liking, he carried out his mission.

During the attack on the confederates Davis' division did not become decisively engaged. However, as the Confederate forces fled from the field of battle, Davis' division gave pursuit and in the vicinity of the Chickamauga Station and Shepard's Run he became heavily engaged with the rearguard of the Confederate forces under the command of Major General Patrick Cleburne. In the fight with Cleburne, Davis lost quite a number of men but in the process captured a number of artillery pieces, a large amount of ammunition and provisions, and about two hundred prisoners. He then pursued the Confederates to Ringgold, Georgia. Upon reaching Ringgold, Davis received orders to have his division move to Cleveland, Tennessee to cover the withdrawal of the Union forces as they moved back into the vicinity of Chattanooga.⁵

It was late November and the Union forces under Sherman's command established camp for the winter months. Davis' division did not get a chance to take advantage of this opportunity. Davis received orders to move his division to Knoxville to relieve General Burnside. On the fifth of December 1863, Davis' division along with the corps under the command of General Howard reached Knoxville.⁶ When they arrived in Knoxville they found that the Confederates were no longer threatening Burnside. Davis was told to return his division to Chattanooga. When Davis' division arrived in Chattanooga, Davis received orders to conduct a reconnaissance to Columbus, Tennessee

along the road that led to Dalton, Georgia. Davis' division conducted the reconnaissance to Columbus. They remained in Columbus for a week and then repositioned to McAfee's Church at Rossville, Georgia. At Rossville, his division took up winter quarters. Davis' forces remained in winter camp till the twentieth of February 1864.⁷

In January of 1864 a court of inquiry was held to review the actions of General McCook at the battle at Chickamauga. Since McCook was Davis' commanding officer at Chickamauga, Davis was given a summons to appear before the court. On the fifteenth of February 1864, Davis testified on McCook's behalf, telling the court that in his opinion McCook did everything that he could have done as a general officer to prosecute the battle. Davis did not think that McCook should be held responsible for the failures of the Union forces on the right wing during the battle at Chickamauga. McCook was cleared of any wrongdoing.

In February of 1864, Davis returned from McCook's court of inquiry to his division in Rossville, Georgia. Davis moved his division toward Dalton to drive out any enemy forces that were located in the passes at Tunnel Hill and Buzzard Roost Gap. Davis' division met the Confederates and became decisively engaged and suffered defeat with heavy casualties among his forces. After the battle, Davis and his division returned to McAfee Church near Rossville, Georgia where they camped till the first of May.⁸

On the first of May, the forces under the command of Sherman began what would eventually lead to the capture of Atlanta.⁹ Davis was still in command of the Second Division of the Fourteenth Corps of the Army of the Cumberland. General James D. Morgan, Colonel John G. Mitchell and Colonel Dan McCook were now the commanders

of Davis' three brigades. Davis' division initially marched back towards Buzzard Gap where they had suffered a very heavy defeat several months earlier at the hands of the Confederates. Davis' division was again unable to force the Confederate forces from the gap and was ordered to move to Snake Creek Gap near Resaca.

The battle of Resaca lasted from the thirteenth till the sixteenth of May. Davis' division did not participate to any great extent in the first two days of the battle. On the fifteenth of May, Davis was ordered by Thomas to make a flanking movement against the Confederates by moving down the Oostanaula Valley and crossing it at a point that would place them in the Confederate rear. Thomas' cavalry under the command of General Kenner Garrard was to find a crossing point for Davis' division. Garrard's cavalry was unable to do so and rejoined Sherman's forces. With no crossing point available, Davis asked and received approval from General Thomas to march his force eighteen miles down the Oostanaula Valley towards Rome. Davis knew that Rome was a place of "great importance on account of its iron works and supply shops."¹⁰

Davis' division reached Rome and on the seventeenth of May and attacked the small Confederate force. By the next day they had driven the Confederates from city. The capture of Rome was a great success for Davis. Upon entering the city he and his men found Rome to be a large supply point for the Confederate army. They captured factories that manufactured and repaired ordnance, as well as several artillery pieces and other supplies that were intended to support the Confederate forces. Davis was ordered to stay in Rome. Davis' forces remained in Rome for six days.

Davis received orders from General McPherson to march his division towards Dallas as quickly as he could to assist the Army of the Tennessee that had Confederate forces forming to its front. Davis complied with the orders and marched his division over the Alatoona Mountain and formed with McPherson at Van-Wert on the road that led from Rome to Dallas. Davis' force was formed on the left of McPherson's command in Dallas. Over the next couple of days, Davis' division fought against the right side of the Confederate forces under the command of General Hardee.¹¹

On the twenty eighth of May, Davis received orders to report with his unit to the Army of the Cumberland. Davis told McPherson and made preparations to pull out of the battle. As his division began its withdrawal they came under attack. Davis did not want to see another situation develop like he had experienced at Chickamauga so he had his division move back into the position from which they were withdrawing. This was a good decision by Davis. Though his force would have to fight the confederates for the remainder of the day and he would be unable to fulfill Thomas' request for him to support Thomas. It was apparent the next morning that the Confederates had retreated and Davis was then able to move his division with Thomas' Army of the Cumberland.

June of 1864 saw Davis involved in several more battles with the Confederates. His division drove the enemy from Allatoona Pass, Ackworth, and Big Shanty. By the end of June, the Army of the Cumberland, including Davis' division, was within twenty-five miles of Atlanta in the vicinity of the city of Marietta and Kennesaw Mountain.

At Kennesaw Mountain, the Confederate forces had entrenched along the top of the mountain. It was apparent that the Union forces would have to attack. Davis'

division was selected as the division to lead the charge up Kennesaw Mountain against the Confederates. In the morning of the twenty eighth of June, after an artillery barrage, Davis' division charged the mountain. They moved for about six hundred yards under extremely intense fire from the Confederates. As the forces under Davis got close to the Confederate line along the top of the mountain, they began to lose momentum. They were exhausted and the heat and the intense confederate fire were taking a toll on their forces. Davis ordered his men to entrench. They were only sixty paces from the Confederate position. For three days, Davis' division remained in their works. The Confederate forces withdrew from their position on the top of Kennesaw Mountain. This had been a terrible battle for Davis' division. His division lost approximately nine hundred men, including Colonel Dan McCook, one of Davis' brigade commanders.¹²

It became obvious to Sherman that the Confederates had built well-fortified positions so he decided to change his tactics. Instead of attacking from the front, as he had done with Davis' division, he used flanking maneuvers to force the Confederates to retreat. This technique proved successful and shortly, Johnston, who commanded the Confederate forces, pulled back from Kennesaw Mountain and positioned his army a few miles south. Davis was ordered after the Confederates and on the fourth of July his division attacked the Confederate forces. The next day the Confederates withdrew further and took up positions behind fortifications along the south bank of the Chattahoochee River. Davis went after the Confederates but was only able to engage the rear guard. He pursued the rear guard till the rear guard was able to retreat behind the safety of fortifications that had been erected on the south bank of the Chattahoochee River. Davis

pursued the Confederates across the river. His forces fought against the Confederates with fervor but were unable to fight through the fortifications. In the process of conducting these attacks on the fortifications, Davis took losses of about 350 men. Davis had to watch as the Confederates were able to escape.¹³

Through the end of July and into August, Davis' division fought many battles and skirmishes in and around the Atlanta area. Slowly Sherman and his Union encircled the city of Atlanta and successfully began to reduce supply support going to the city. In the beginning of the month of August, General Palmer the Fourteenth Corps commander, resigned. He had had a personal conflict with General Schofield, the commander of the Army of the Ohio. Sherman heard of the conflict and criticized Palmer for having had the confrontation with Schofield. As a result, Palmer submitted his resignation.¹⁴ The command of the Fourteenth Corps was given to General R. W. Johnson. Johnson was only temporarily in command. He soon received orders to return to Nashville. This left a vacancy in the Fourteenth Corps command and Davis was selected to fill the position as the permanent commander. By the sixteenth of August, orders arrived from Washington that promoted Davis to Brevet Major General and he promptly took full command of the corps.¹⁵

By this time the city of Atlanta was virtually cut off from all access for supplies except for two locations to the south of the city. One of these was a rail line to Montgomery, Alabama, and the other was a link to Macon, Georgia. On the twenty fifth of August, Sherman led his forces to the south of Atlanta and captured the rail line that led to Montgomery. On the first of September 1864, Davis along with the forces under

the command of General Howard attacked the last Confederate defenses along the supply road that led to Macon in the vicinity of Jonesboro. Again Davis was fighting against the troops under the command of Hardee. Forming his two divisions into two lines, Davis moved across open cotton fields and fell upon Hardee's entrenched forces. Davis' men were too much for the Confederates, who retreated into Atlanta. In the process Davis' divisions captured almost 2,000 men and eight pieces of artillery. Davis had been instrumental in cutting the last confederate supply line into Atlanta.¹⁶ After the battle, Davis' divisions remained at Jonesboro.

The night of the first of September was not quiet. The Confederates vacated Atlanta and destroyed the ammunition they had stored in the city. The next day the union forces captured Atlanta. During the following three weeks Davis and his corps rested and recuperated in Atlanta.¹⁷ At the end of September it was discovered that Hood's forces were still in the vicinity of Atlanta, and were moving to the north to destroy the Union supply lines that connected Chattanooga with Atlanta. Sherman decided to pursue Hood and with Davis' corps participating, Sherman moved towards Chattanooga with part of his forces. Soon it was discovered that Hood was not going to Chattanooga but was going into Alabama. Davis' forces were in the vicinity of Resaca when they got the word that Hood was in Alabama. With this news, Davis established camp in Resaca to await further instruction.¹⁸

Hood had gone into Alabama because he believed that could prevent the Union forces under Sherman from going further south. He thought that Sherman would see him (Hood) as a threat and would be concerned about protecting the northern lines. Sherman,

in a letter he sent to Washington to appraise them of the situation, seemed to know that this was Hood's intention. In the letter he sent he included a plan in which he outlined that the Army's under the Command of Thomas and Schofield as well as half of his forces would go into Tennessee and Alabama to find and fight Hood's forces. While this took place it was his intentions to move with the remaining half of his force, approximately 50,000 soldiers, towards the coastline of Georgia. Washington approved Sherman's plan.

As a result of Sherman's new plan Davis found himself under the control of another commander. As Thomas moved into Tennessee, Davis' corps was detached and fell under the command of General Henry W. Slocum, who was now in charge of the Army of Georgia, which had just been formed. It was the middle of October, and Davis left Resaca and moved his forces to Kingston where they set up camp again and prepared for the march to the coast of Georgia. In the middle of November of 1864 Davis received orders to break camp and move his forces towards the coast. It was November twelfth when the movement began. Davis' forces were on the left wing of Sherman's army as they began their movement.¹⁹

Davis' forces left Kingston and headed towards Atlanta. As they moved along the railroad towards Atlanta they destroyed the railroad and the telegraph lines that ran along them. By the fifteenth of November, Davis' corps had arrived in Atlanta.²⁰ Sherman addressed his corps commanders at Atlanta and told them of the scope of the operations that they were about to undertake as they moved to the coast. He also told them what he expected them to do in destruction of property and equipment that he believed might be

used by the Confederates.²¹ That night, the Union forces in Atlanta proceeded to destroy anything associated with the Confederates. Much of Atlanta was burned.

The next day, the sixteenth of November, the Union forces moved out of Atlanta and on to Decatur, Georgia. Davis' corps, positioned on the left flank of the Union forces marched past Stone Mountain and arrived in the town of Lithonia, which was to the southwest of the Yellow River. Here they tore up the tracks of the Georgia Railroad. Next Davis' corps advanced on Covington and then moved on to Milledgeville.²²

It was the twenty second of November when Davis' corps arrived to the west of Milledgeville and set up camp for the night. His soldiers had been pushed hard and were weary. The place where they camped was close to water and the woods and fields that surrounded their location were filled with food to eat. The next morning Davis' forces were on the move again and by noon of the twenty third of November they had traveled ten miles and were in the town of Milledgeville. Milledgeville was the capital of Georgia, and Davis' forces burned everything they believed to be of value to the Confederates.²³

On the twenty fourth of November, Davis' corps moved from Milledgeville towards Sandersville, reaching the latter place on the twenty sixth. From Sandersville, Davis' corps moved towards the northeast and Louisville. Thus far, Davis corps had moved without any confrontation with Confederate forces. On the thirtieth of November Davis encountered Confederate soldiers at Big Creek just to the east of Louisville. The Confederate forces were only skirmishers and Davis' units easily forced them back across the creek. Davis' forces kept moving and from Louisville they moved onto the town of

Millen. When Davis arrived just to the north of Millen he received orders to join forces with the cavalry, under the command of General Judson Kilpatrick, and move towards Augusta, Georgia. Davis' corps and Kilpatrick's cavalry were well to the north of the rest of Sherman's army. Past Augusta, Davis' forces ran into some more Confederate skirmishers near Waynesboro. The contact was minimal and they continued to move towards Sister's Ferry, which was located on the Savannah River. As Davis' forces prepared to cross the Savannah River, Davis received a message from Sherman that he was to not cross the Savannah River, but was to turn his forces to the southeast and move along the Savannah River on to Savannah.²⁴

The movement along the Savannah River was not an easy one for Davis and Kilpatrick's forces. Many swamps cut the route and it made for very difficult travel. Along the route to Savannah, Confederate cavalry attacked Davis and his corps repelled the attack.²⁵ By the middle of December, Sherman's forces began to arrive in the vicinity of Savannah and formed a line around the city. In route to Savannah, Sherman's forces had left nothing but destruction from Atlanta to Savannah. The movement to the coast had been a bold move on the part of Sherman as he had no supply lines to the north and any supplies he needed he had to get from the land or from captured Confederate stocks. As Union forces sat in positions around the city of Savannah, Davis' forces were positioned on the extreme left with the left side of his forces resting on the banks of the Savannah River. While in position the Union forces fought several small skirmishes with the Confederates. By the twentieth of December, though, Hardee, commanding the Confederate forces that occupied Savannah, had evacuated his forces and on the twenty

first of December, Sherman entered Savannah. It was Christmas, and Sherman had successfully marched across Georgia and had laid claim to Savannah for the Union army. He presented Savannah as a Christmas gift to the country.²⁶

From the twenty first of December till the middle of January 1865, Sherman and his forces occupied Savannah and prepared themselves for follow-on plans to march up the coast to the north. On the twentieth of January 1865, with the preparations complete, Sherman's forces began their movement into South Carolina by crossing the Savannah River.²⁷ Once Davis' forces had crossed into South Carolina they crisscrossed the state with Sherman's forces, destroying towns and cities and tearing up railroad tracks as they progressed. They met with very little resistance from the Confederates.

By the end of February and into the early parts of March Davis and his corps moved into North Carolina. As they moved into North Carolina Davis' forces found themselves meeting larger Confederate forces. Davis and his corps made their way to Fayetteville, North Carolina and set up camp. By the middle of March, Davis and his corps moved from Fayetteville to Bentonville where they participated in a major fight with the Confederates. After the victory at Bentonville, Davis and his corps consolidated with the other forces of Sherman's army in the vicinity of Goldsboro, North Carolina and on the eleventh of April all of Sherman's forces moved on to Raleigh, North Carolina. Enroute to Raleigh, Davis' corps met with some opposition from Confederate skirmishers and by the eighteenth of April Davis' forces were in Raleigh and the Civil War was ended.²⁸

Following the end of the Civil War, Davis moved with his corps to Washington where they participated in a large review of the forces. From Washington, Davis' corps was ordered to Louisville where men were mustered out of the service in 1866. Davis, after being mustered out of the service, returned to the Regular Army with the rank of Colonel and on the twenty third of July 1866, he took command of the Twenty-Third U.S. Infantry. Generals Grant and Sherman made recommendations that Davis be given the rank of Brigadier General but this did not happen.²⁹

Davis was employed as a reorganizer and served with the Twenty-Third U.S. Infantry on the Pacific coast in the newly purchased Territory of Alaska. He took the assignment in Alaska cheerfully and he took a genuine deep interest in the affairs of the very remote territory.³⁰ From 1868 to 1871 he remained in the Alaskan Territory and during this time he resided with Price Maksutoff, who provided him with a great understanding and appreciation for Alaska.³¹ As reductions continued in the Department of Alaska, Davis and his regiment were moved down to the Oregon territory, which was commanded at that time by General E. R. S. Canby.

In the spring of 1873, General Canby, while negotiating with the Modoc Indians and a peace commissioner in the lava beds of northern California, was murdered. With the death of Canby, Davis took over the command of the department temporarily and immediately took to punishing the Modoc Indians severely, forcing them to surrender. He then had what was left of the tribe removed and placed at a location where they were powerless to conduct any more "mischief."³²

Davis continued to serve on the west coast till his health started to fail. He had been working and pushing himself very hard and the effects were taking their toll on him. His regiment was transferred to Omaha, Nebraska and shortly thereafter it was moved to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. At Fort Leavenworth he participated in the establishment a school of instruction for the infantry. His regiment then received orders to return to the Indian frontier, but because his health was so poor, Davis did not deploy with the regiment. Instead, he was advised to reestablish his health through rest and travel.³³

Davis remained at Fort Leavenworth assisting in the development of the school for the instruction of infantry. Davis' last military duty was as a member of a board appointed to meet in Chicago to determine and reconcile conflicts of opinion that surrounded the battles of Stone River and Chickamauga. Davis was selected to participate in the discussion because he was one who had played an honorable part in the battle.³⁴ The board was scheduled to meet at the end of November and the first part of December of 1879.

Davis made his preparations at Fort Leavenworth for the trip to Chicago. While making these preparations, he received word that he needed to adjust his travel schedule. As the elected senior Vice-President of the Society of the Army of the Cumberland, he was needed to preside over a meeting in Washington at which there was going to be the unveiling of a statue for General Thomas. He was selected to participate in this ceremony because General Sherman, who was the President of the Society of the Army of the Cumberland, had a conflict in his schedule and was unable to attend. The unveiling of the statue of General Thomas took place on the nineteenth and twentieth of November

1879 in an outdoor ceremony in which the temperatures were extremely cold. It was at this ceremony that Davis, already weak and in poor health, contracted pneumonia.³⁵

Following the ceremony in Washington, Davis continued to Chicago to attend the reconciliation meetings of the battles of Stone River and Chickamauga. Davis' health worsened quickly and on the thirtieth of November 1879, Davis died in the Palmer House in Chicago from pneumonia.³⁶ Thus ended the career of a man whose military career had lasted more than thirty years.

¹Jefferson C. Davis, *Personal Account of Civil War Experience to Commanding Officer* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Indiana Historical Society, 4 January 1866), 30; and A. C. McClurg, *Memorial Address for the "Society of the Army of the Cumberland"* Jefferson C. Davis Collection, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana, [1880], 11.

²Davis, 30.

³*Ibid.*

⁴Daniel H. Hill, "Chickamauga-The Great Battle of the West." *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, Vol. 3 (New York: The Century Company, 1888), 673; and *O.R.*, vol 31, part 2, 84-85.

⁵Davis, 31.

⁶McClurg, 11.

⁷Davis, 32.

⁸*Ibid* 32-33.

⁹McClurg, 12

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 12-13.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 13.

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³Ibid., 14.

¹⁴Oliver O. Howard, *Autobiography of Oliver Otis Howard*. vol. 2 (New York: The Baker and Taylor Company, 1907), 29; and William. T. Sherman, *Memoirs of General William T. Sherman*, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (New York: D. Appleton, 1889), 101.

¹⁵McClurg, 14.

¹⁶McClurg, 14; and Lloyd Lewis, *Sherman, Fighting Prophet* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Co., 1932), 406.

¹⁷McClurg, 15.

¹⁸Davis, 39

¹⁹Ibid., 40.

²⁰Davis 41; and Fenwick Y. Hedley, *Marching Through Georgia* (Chicago: Donohue, Henneberry and Company, 1890), 320.

²¹Sherman, 101.

²²*O.R.*, vol. 44, part 2 163; and Jacob D. Cox, *The March to the Sea-Franklin and Nashville* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1882), 27.

²³Sherman, 184-185.

²⁴Davis, 40.

²⁵*O.R.*, vol. 44, part 2, 167.

²⁶Frank J. Welcher, *The Union Army, 1861-1865: Organization and Operations*, vol. 2: *The Eastern Theater* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1993), 1000-1008.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸McClurg, 18.

²⁹Joseph P. Fried, "How one Union General Murdered Another." *Civil War Times Illustrated* 1 no. 3, (June 1962): 16.

³⁰J. W. Gordon, Memorial and Resolution on the Death of General Jefferson C. Davis. General Order 104 for 1879, General Sherman on announcing the death of Jefferson C. Davis (Indianapolis, Indiana: Indiana Historical Society).

³¹Jacob Piatt Dunn, *Indiana and Indianans: A History of Aboriginal and Territorial Indiana and the Century of Statehood*, vol. 4 (Chicago and New York: The American Historical Society, 1919), 1564.

³²*Ibid.*

³³Gordon, General Order 104.

³⁴*Ibid.*

³⁵McClurg, 18-19.

³⁶John G. Leydon, "The Other Jefferson Davis." *Civil War, The Magazine of The Civil War Society*, no. 58 (August 1996): 58.

CHAPTER 8

ANALYSIS OF DAVIS

Jefferson C. Davis died at the age of fifty-one. His death brought to close the life of a man who, from the time he was a young boy, knew that he wanted to be a soldier. Davis spent more than thirty years wearing the uniform of his country and advanced from the rank of private in the Mexican War to the rank of brevet Major General in command of a corps at the end of the Civil War. He was born to be a soldier.¹ Unfortunately, "his strong energetic spirit wore out his less robust body."²

Davis' career was not without controversy, and his career as a soldier is of great interest. Davis, in many ways, was a nontraditional officer who was a member of an officer corps that was very traditional. As a private in the volunteers of Indiana he participated in the Mexican War where he performed admirably and was promoted to sergeant because of his bravery and skill as a soldier. Following the war he left the army and returned to the family farm in Indiana. A year after returning to the farm he was offered a commission to second lieutenant and accepted it.

The process of receiving a commission without going through the military education system of the United States Military Academy separated him from many of his general officer peers who participated in the Civil War. He was considered an outsider. Many of the graduates from the United States Military Academy knew one another well. They had fought as junior officers together in the Mexican War, and because of their

shared experiences at the military academy and in battle they had a strong allegiance towards one another.

Davis was an active participant in the Civil War from the day that Fort Sumter was fired upon to the close of the Civil War when the surrender of the Confederate forces to the Union forces took place. From the beginning of his career, he was in the field with his soldiers, "organizing and inspiring, leading and fighting."³ He always focused on the missions that he was given, and when something was needed to be done, he would not ask anyone to do what he would not be willing to do. He had a bold spirit and was very self-reliant with a quick temper. He was cool and calm in his judgment. When in contact with the enemy, it was his nature to take the initiative and attack quickly. As a commander, his attacks were well planned and excellently executed.⁴

As the different major battles of the Civil War that he was involved in are reflected upon, from the Blackwater Expedition, to Cross Timbers and Pea Ridge, to Murfreesboro, Chickamauga, and the march through the south with General Sherman, one can sense that Davis was one who was always looking for the fight. He was often selected to conduct those expeditions that required someone with assertiveness to pursue the enemy. Often Davis would march his forces on exhausting marches to close with the enemy and attack when it seemed certain that the enemy would be able to escape. Davis' was decisive and his ability to size up a situation, plan the mission, and execute an attack was unmatched and showed the skill of a soldier of the best military character.⁵

Davis received commendations and recommendations for promotions to higher rank on many occasions following his successful performance in battle during the Civil

War. These commendations espoused the bravery and gallantry of Davis and the excellence of his ability to command troops. Despite the recommendations for promotion, the promotions did not occur. Some accounts of Davis' career lament the fact that he did not receive promotional consideration because of his performance in battle.⁶

Questions exist as to why Davis was or was not given the recognition that he was thought by many to deserve. One reason put forth is that he was personally opposed to pushing for promotion outside of anything but military channels. He did not seek out political assistance to get promoted, and he shied away from trying to place his name in the papers where he could easily become familiar to many people.⁷ Often, promotions in the general officer ranks occurred because of associations that general officers had with state and federal politicians. The fact that those who made promotion decisions had personal knowledge of one officer over another and would choose to promote those whom they knew better or were better friends with left Davis at a disadvantage. He had very few army friends in influential positions that could assist in influencing promotion selections for him.

Another reason Davis may not have received promotion to higher rank is because of the shooting incident in which Davis, in a fit of anger, shot his superior officer Major General William Nelson, at the Galt House in Louisville, Kentucky. From the accounts given of the encounter between Davis and Nelson, there was nothing that justified the action that Davis chose to take in shooting and killing Nelson. Some said that his act was indeed "a high crime and gross violation of military discipline."⁸ This observation may

be true, and it is also true that Davis was never prosecuted through the judicial system for this criminal act.

Davis' actions were not the appropriate way to handle a verbal disagreement between two general officers, even in a day when dueling was considered honorable. Nelson's death was not a dual, but a cold-blooded killing. The incident is indicative of the quick anger that Davis was known to have. Davis was never tried for Nelson's killing, and this may explain why Davis did not receive promotions when he was recommended for them. Those who made the decisions on promotions may have considered Davis' act against Nelson and thought it better that Davis not receive further promotion. Failure to promote Davis, in essence, made the statement to Davis that he should have been punished for the killing of Nelson.

Davis was not always a popular general either, and the things that he did, such as pushing his men to their breaking points to accomplish missions, did not always appeal to those around him. He did things as he thought they needed to be done. He was not a soldier because he wanted to be popular but because it was his passion and he had a sense of patriotic duty and responsibility. He was serious about his profession and knew that in order for him and his men to survive and to have success that he needed to be a disciplinarian and needed to push his men in training and maintaining their military skills.⁹

One account of Davis' performance that does not paint quite a stellar image of the man is the comments from one of his subordinate brigade commanders. These comments can be found in the after-action summary of Brigadier General William P. Carlin

following the battle at Chickamauga. In his official report of the battle of Chickamauga, Carlin infers that Davis was away from the battlefield and that he was not available to fight the battle and direct his troops.¹⁰ In response to this assertion by Carlin, Davis responded that Carlin , “has seen fit to introduce a number of uncalled-for and out-of-place insinuations and reflections” and that the “reflections and insinuations are false representation” and that they are believed to have been introduced from “motives of malice.”¹¹ To support Davis’ defense against the assertions by Carlin, Captain William Hotchkiss, reported in his reflection of the battle that Davis was indeed still at the battle at the time that Carlin asserts that Davis was nowhere to be found. From Hotchkiss’ report of the battle at Chickamauga, Davis was trying to rally troops and get them back into the fight.¹²

To those who really had the opportunity to know Davis, he was considered, when not pushing his men, to be good-natured, an animated conversationalist with candid comments in discussions, and a kind manner about him.¹³ Davis’ soldiers recognized his toughness, but they also recognized his purpose in pushing them to train and fight. He was always concerned about their welfare.¹⁴

Following the Civil War, Davis thought that his own performance in the war was deserving of a review to determine if he should receive a promotion to a higher rank. He had finished the war as a brevetted major general, and when the war was over and he was released back to the regular army, he was returned to the rank of colonel in the regular army. Davis made his case in his own defense in a forty-seven-page letter that he wrote

to his "general officer" on 4 January 1866. He chronicled his participation in the Civil War and his performance. In closing the letter Davis wrote:

Since the Battle of Stones River I have ever thought that justice has been withheld from me in promotion; and I think so still. Be this as it may I feel assured that every commander under whom I have served will bear testimony to the fact that I have always tried to do my duty to the best of my ability.¹⁵

The success or failure of a battle in the Civil War fell in large part upon the shoulders of the leaders in command of the units that were fighting. It was the commander's responsibility to ensure that he understood the battlefield and the orders that he had been given and that he place his unit in the location where it needed to be in order to be successful and stop the enemy's attack. Davis was a commander who consistently did this throughout his career. His aggressive personality and style lent itself to getting into the fight and giving it his full effort. He was often seen as the aggressor who would initiate contact with the enemy and give chase to fleeing enemy units without hesitation in an attempt to defeat them.

Davis, it seems, despite his feisty character and aggressive personality was often very successful on the battlefield and was an important part of the success of the Union Army during the Civil War. He did make mistakes, as did many others, on the battlefield. He also made a large mistake that reflected poor judgment on his part when he killed Major General Nelson. When examined on the whole, Davis' aggressive nature may not have placed him in good stead with his peers and senior officers. Additionally, his non-traditional ascension through the ranks of the military may not have fared him well in the eyes of others either. It can be learned from Davis that success should not be

determined by having attended that right schools or knowing then right people, but should come from recognized experience and the success that a person has had previously in accomplishing missions that they have been assigned. This holds true today.

Davis was a man who was passionate about the military and the success of the men and the accomplishment of the missions he was given. Despite having taken a non-traditional route in joining the military and not receiving promotions that it seems were due him, he carried out his responsibilities with great diligence and purpose irrespective of the positive or negative consequences they might have on his career. Davis was a soldier's soldier who cared about his men and was always focused on the mission.

¹James B. Fry, *Killed by a Brother Soldier: A Chapter in the History of the War* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1885), 10.

²A. C. McClurg, *Memorial Address for the "Society of the Army of the Cumberland"* Jefferson C. Davis Collection, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana, [1880], 19.

³*Ibid.*, 20.

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷*Ibid.*, 21.

⁸Joseph P. Fried, "How One Union General Murdered Another," *Civil War Times Illustrated* 1, no. 3 (June 1962): 16.

⁹McClurg, 21

¹⁰*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 517.

¹¹*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 519.

¹²*O.R.*, vol. 30, part 1, 505.

¹³McClurg, 21-22.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 22.

¹⁵Davis, 47.

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Combat Studies Institute
U.S. Army Command and General Staff College
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Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-1352

COL Lawyn C. Edwards
Combat Studies Institute
U.S. Army Command and General Staff College
1 Reynolds Avenue
Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-1352

LTC Kim M. Juntunen
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U.S. Army Command and General Staff College
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